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My War Memories

1914-1918

By General Ludendorff

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With 12 large Maps and
46 smaller Maps in the text

VOL. I

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SECOND EDITION

LONDON HUTCHINSON & CO
PATERNOSTER ROW

TO THE HEROES
WHO FELL BELIEVING
IN
GERMANY'S GREATNESS
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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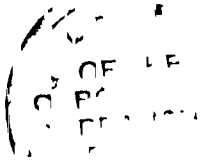

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PREFACE

DURING the four years of fighting I was unable to keep any record of events. I had not the time. Now that I have more leisure, I propose to repair this omission by writing my experiences during the Great War, drawing chiefly upon my memory for the narrative.

It has been my destiny to hold various high appointments. Upon Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and myself, in conjunction with other men, devolved the task of conducting the defence of the Fatherland.

In these pages I propose to give an account of those deeds of the German people and their Army with which my name will for all time be associated. I shall tell of my strivings and of all that I lived through in this struggle of the nations—how the German people fought as men have never fought before, how they endured, and how their efforts were gradually paralysed.

Germany has not yet had time for introspection and heart-searching. She is too heavily weighed down. And yet she can take heart from the magnificent deeds of her Army, and from all they, too, accomplished who worked at home. But if she wishes to learn anything from the succession of events which culminated in her undoing, she has no time to lose, for the world's history strides ruthlessly on, and tramples under foot those nations who tear themselves to pieces by internal conflict.

LUDENDORFF.

Written at Hessleholmsgard, in Sweden, between November, 1918, and February, 1919; completed in Berlin by the 23rd of June, the day on which we accepted (!) the Peace.

MY WAR MEMORIES,

1914-1918.

MY THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS

I

THE *coup de main* at Liége was the first of the series of German victories. The decision was a bold one, and its execution extremely daring.

The campaigns of 1914, 1915 and the summer of 1916 in the East were tremendous achievements, equal to the greatest military feats of any age. They made the highest demands on both commanders and troops. The Russians were then greatly superior in numbers to the allied German and Austro-Hungarian armies opposed to them.

But, indeed, the operations which Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and I had to conduct from the 29th August, 1916, the day we assumed supreme command, rank among the most formidable in history. Nothing more awe-inspiring and destructive has ever been seen on earth. Germany, inferior in numbers and with weak allies, was contending against the world. Decisions of the utmost gravity had to be taken. They were the inevitable and logical result of the situation, our general conception of war, and the particular circumstances of this war.

The armies and fleets fought as they had fought in days past, even though numbers and equipment were mightier than ever

before. What made this war different from all others was the manner in which the home populations supported and reinforced their armed forces with all the resources at their disposal. Only in France, in 1870–71, had anything of the kind been seen before.

In this war it was impossible to distinguish where the sphere of the Army and Navy began and that of the people ended. Army and people were one. The world witnessed the War of Nations in the most literal sense of the word. In this mighty concentration of effort the Great Powers of the earth faced each other. And not only between the armed forces did the combat rage along those huge fronts and on distant oceans. The *moral* and vital force of the civil population was assailed with the purpose of corroding and paralysing them.

With big battalions it is neither difficult nor very risky to wage war and fight battles. But in the first three years of the war the Field-Marshal and I never found ourselves in that enviable position. We could but act as duty and conscience dictated, and adopt the measures we deemed necessary to secure victory. During this period success crowned our efforts.

When, in March, 1918, we attacked with the balance of numbers more in our favour than had previously been the case, our strength sufficed to win great victories, but not to bring about a rapid decision. Then it dwindled, while the enemy grew stronger

II

This world-wide war of nations made enormous demands on us Germans, on whom its whole overwhelming burden fell. Every individual had to give his very utmost, if we were to win. We had literally to fight and work to the last drop of blood and sweat, and yet maintain our fighting spirit and, above all, our confidence in victory: a hard but imperative necessity, in spite of the dearth of food which the enemy imposed on us, and the onslaught of his propaganda, which was of amazing force, if unobtrusive.

Our Army and Navy are rooted in the Nation, as is the oak in German soil. They live upon the homeland, and from it they draw their strength. They can keep, but cannot produce, what they need, and can only fight with the moral, material and physical means which the country provides. These means make possible victory, faithful devotion and unselfish self-sacrifice in the daily battle and the miseries of war. They alone could secure Germany's final success. With them our country waged the titanic conflict against the world, even allowing for the assistance of our Allies and the exploitation of occupied territories as far as the laws of land warfare permitted.

The Army and Navy had thus to look to the homeland for their constant renewal and rejuvenation in *moral*, numbers and equipment.

It was essential to maintain the *moral* and war spirit of those at home at the highest pitch. Woe to us if they should fail! The longer the war lasted, the greater grew the danger of this, the harder it became to overcome difficulties, and the more imperious were the demands of the Army and Navy for spiritual and moral reinforcement.

The very last resources, both in men and material, had to be made available and devoted to the prosecution of the war.

These were enormous tasks for the country. The homeland was not only the basis on which our proud military power rested, and which must therefore be carefully safeguarded; it was the life-giving source which had to be kept clear, pure and yet potent, lest it lose anything of that virtue wherewith it steeled the nerves and renewed the strength of the Army and Navy. The nation needed those inner spiritual forces which alone enabled it to go on revitalizing the Army and Navy. The spheres of the nation and of the armed forces were so intermingled that it was impossible to separate them. The fighting efficiency of the forces in face of the enemy depended absolutely upon that of the people at home. That meant that everyone at home must work and live for the war in a way that had never been known before. It was for the Government, and the Imperial Chancellor who was specially responsible, to direct and foster that spirit.

Upon this Minister devolved another important war function: the direction of operations against the enemy's home fronts. Should Germany neglect to use this powerful weapon, the effects of which she daily experienced in her own body? Should we not attack the *moral* of our enemies in the same way as they were, unfortunately so successfully, attacking ours? This contest had first to be transferred to neutral countries, and thence from front to front. But Germany always lacked one mighty means of propaganda: starvation of the enemy peoples by blockade.

The Government had great problems to solve if the war was to be brought to a successful conclusion. No greater demand has ever been made on a German government than to place the united strength of the German people at the disposal of the Emperor in order to secure victory in the field, and carry on the war against the spirit and *moral* of the enemy nations. Thus the action and conduct of the Government attained decisive importance. This meant that Government, Reichstag and People must devote themselves utterly to the idea of war That was the only way: the power to wage war had its source at home and was put to the proof at the front.

The great aim of peace could only be attained by relentless prosecution of the war. By working for the war, therefore, the Government at the same time paved the way for peace, to attain which at the first possible moment was their glorious, ultimate goal.

Soon after we were summoned to assume the supreme command, and had time to consider the situation in all its bearings, the Field-Marshal and I laid our views as to the requirements of the Army and Navy before the Imperial Chancellor, and discussed the problems which they raised for the country. We called upon him to co-operate in prosecuting the war, and were buoyed up with hope in spite of the menacing aspect of the situation.

The Government had welcomed our appointment to the supreme command. We met them with frank confidence. Soon, however, two schools of thought, represented by their views and ours, began to come into conflict. This divergence of view

was a great disappointment to us and vastly increased our burden.

In Berlin they were unable to accept our opinion as to the necessity of certain war measures, or to steel their wills to the point of magnetizing the whole nation and directing its life and thought to the single idea of war and victory. The great democracies of the Entente did better. With an iron wil Gambetta in 1870–71, and Clemenceau and Lloyd George in this war, enrolled their peoples in the service of victory. Our Govern ment failed to recognize this inflexible purpose and the definite intention of the Entente to destroy us. They should never have doubted it. Instead of concentrating all our resources and using them to the utmost in order to achieve peace on the battle-field, as the very nature of war demands, the authorities in Berlin followed a different path : they talked more and more about reconciliation and understanding, without giving our own people a strong warlike impetus at the same time. In Berlin they believed, or deceived themselves into believing, that the hostile nations were longing to hear words of recon- ciliation and would urge their governments towards peace So little did they understand the mind of our enemies, both people and governments, their strong national feeling and unbending will. Berlin had learned nothing from history. They only felt their own impotence in face of the enemy's spirit ; they lost the hope of victory and drifted. The desire for peace became stronger than the will to fight for victory. The road to peace was blocked by the will of the enemy, whose aim was our destruction ; in seeking it the Government neglected to lead the nation by the hard road to victory.

Reichstag and People found themselves without that strong lead which, generally speaking, they longed for, and slid with the Government down the slippery way. The tremendous questions arising out of the war were more and more thrust on one side, for people's minds were occupied with questions of internal politics and thoughts of self. That meant the ruin of our country,

It may be that the revolution which is now shattering Europe may usher in a new world order and make the thoughts and

feelings of the nations more ready for a peace of justice and reconciliation. The armistice and peace conditions certainly point the other way. In any case, all the time I was First Quartermaster-General the world had not yet changed.

Our General Staff took the same view as President Wilson, who supported his demand for a great American naval programme on the grounds that it would be absurd for America to adjust her naval programme to a future world policy, when the latter had not yet been decided.

In November, 1918, the President of the Soldiers' Council of the 4th Army wrote :

" Some people may think that the Revolution can be built up on ideals. Those who are at the front must agree that the world-policy of the Entente at the present time is infected by materialism."

The astonished world, its ideals shattered, now perceives this clearly. The German people has been misled, and is now paying for its delusion with its life.

The General Staff urged the view that it would be time enough for us to lay down our arms and think about understandings when human nature had undergone a change ; otherwise we were bound to suffer. The palm of peace is no defence against the sword. As long as human beings, and above all our enemies, remained the same as mankind has ever been, it was for Germany, and in any event, the Field-Marshal and myself, as the responsible military leaders, to hold the sword tight and keep it sharp. It was, therefore, our serious duty, in dealing with the Government, to insist on the necessary war-measures being carried out, and to try and infuse into them that degree of determination which we thought was required.

In all questions the General Staff addressed itself to the constitutional authorities. The war required rapid and far-reaching decisions at any moment, and thus stimulated that quality of resolution on which it was always making demands. In Berlin the old peace routine held sway. Replies, even to the most important questions, often did not arrive for weeks. In consequence of this extraordinary dilatoriness on the part of

the Berlin authorities, and their failure to grasp the necessities of the war, the tone of our correspondence at times became somewhat acrimonious. This we regretted, but we were consumed with justifiable impatience. Immediate action was called for, for it was often a question of averting some irreparable disaster.

In peace time the Imperial Government was the supreme authority. The Foreign Office considered itself above all criticism. The Government Departments only gradually accustomed themselves to the idea that on the outbreak of war a new authority, General Headquarters, had come into being, which not only shared the responsibility with the Imperial Chancellor, but bore such an enormous proportion that it had necessarily to try and make good their inertia by displaying greater energy on its own part. I could have wished that the Government had recognized this simple situation as clearly. The position of General von Moltke and General von Falkenhayn in relation to the Government was essentially the same as that of the Field-Marshal and myself.

The Government went their own way, and, as regards the wishes of General Headquarters, neglected nothing which they considered essential. But much was left undone that had been insisted on as urgently necessary for the prosecution of the war.

Directly after war broke out, General Headquarters was obliged to take action in connection with several matters which were really the sphere of other authorities. The Press, the censorship, precautions against spies and sabotage at home, dealing with revolutionaries, all these wide fields were left to the unaided efforts of the military authorities, to the detriment of the conduct of the war. Uncertainty as to their powers and lack of personnel checked the initiative of the authorities concerned. Its strong sense of responsibility urged the General Staff to creative work. It was better able to meet the requirements in personnel than other departments, particularly from among well-trained officers of the Reserve on leave. And so the direction of this work fell into the hands of the General Staff. The execution often remained in those of the home authorities

The line of demarcation, within which these authorities considered themselves to be solely responsible, was not clearly defined. Friction was unavoidable. This would have been avoided by that resolute leadership at home for which General Headquarters often asked.

III

As First Quartermaster-General it was often my duty, personally to lay the demands of the General Staff before the Government.

Of political personages and parties I took no account. Those parties which were for ever talking about "Understanding," instead of fostering the warlike spirit of the nation, did not recognize the need for the demands put forward. The Government shared their views. And thus the Government and the Majority Parties found themselves in agreement and adopted an antagonistic attitude towards me and my military views and wishes.

It was obvious that I had more supporters among those parties which, like myself, regarded an understanding as impossible in view of the enemy's determination to destroy us, and therefore wished the war to be carried on with the greatest energy. I never asked for their support, but they trusted me. These parties belonged to the Right—the Minority. And so, although I thought only of the war, the rest labelled me "Reactionary." Had I found my own ideas accepted by the democratic parties, I should have found supporters among them also; in which case the "Right" would perhaps have abused me as a "Democrat," and, as a matter of fact, this happened often enough.

I am neither a "Reactionary" nor a "Democrat." All I stand for is the prosperity, the cultural progress and national strength of the German people, authority and order. These are the pillars on which the future of our country rests. During the war we had only one aim, to develop the greatest energy in its prosecution, and so secure our military existence, and with it our

equally important economic existence, both during and after the war.

The inertia of the Imperial Government in so many matters had unpleasant consequences for me, in that ill-wishers, and sometimes even over-zealous friends, dragged me into the strife of parties, although I was not at all concerned and never put myself forward in any way. What I did was misrepresented and criticized without reference to circumstances. My actions and statements were misinterpreted. Vague and totally unfounded assertions were spread broadcast. At first, my frank and soldierly way of thinking prompted me to dismiss all this with a shrug of the shoulders ; it was not worth notice in view of the great work on which I was engaged. Later on I regretted these occurrences, but was unable to do anything to prevent them. I repeatedly asked the Press to leave me alone. Beyond that, I was too busy to take any action myself. Besides, I had no platform from which to speak, and above all, I gave the German nation credit for more sense of the stern reality. But it suited the Government to have discovered a lightning-conductor. Instead of protecting me they gave free rein to the agitators, represented me as a dictator, put everything down to the General Staff, and so embittered the feeling against me. That was the position, broadly speaking. The two Chancellors, Dr. Michaelis and Count von Hertling, were far above any such intrigues, but the irreparable mischief—and, in view of my military position, it was nothing short of a national disaster—was already done.

It became more and more the fashion to hold the General Staff, which in this case meant myself, responsible for our troubles and miseries. For example, my name was associated not only with the unavoidable hardships, but even with some of the abominations of the home rationing system. Indeed, I was represented as their author and blamed accordingly. Neither the Quartermaster-General, nor the Intendant-General, nor I had anything to do with the food supply at home, which was entirely in the hands of the War Ministry and the Food Contro Office.

After my resignation I heard from leaders of the Social Democratic Party that I had been responsible for the manner in which the G.O.C.'s of the Corps Districts had administered the regulations dealing with the right of public meeting. This was entirely outside my province.

The following case is typical. In the winter of 1916–17 I was blamed for the shortage of transport and coal. This was mainly due to insufficient provision having been made before I was appointed to General Headquarters. In February, 1917, I urged the appointment of a Coal Controller. Unfortunately the right man was not discovered at once, and another had to be selected later on. In the summer of 1917 50,000 miners were released by General Headquarters from service at the front. In the winter of 1917–18 house-fuel was more plentiful than in the previous one; but General Headquarters, which had taken decisive measures and was certainly more responsible for the improved situation than for the bad conditions of 1916–17, got neither thanks nor credit. That did not fit in with the ideas of those who were agitating against me, or of those others who, though better informed themselves, allowed the agitation to go on.

The enormous responsibility I had to bear made me long for the conclusion of hostilities; how could it have been otherwise? I often expressed myself in that sense. But unless we got a peace which safeguarded the existence of our country, the war would be lost. I could not see how peace was possible unless the enemy also was ready for it. I thought it very dangerous for us to be alone in announcing a desire for peace.

I was fully aware that nations do not get peace merely by talking about it, or even heartily longing for it. The pacifist idea of a peace by understanding was for many a weapon against us. Many others sincerely believed in it, being moved by that spirit of exalted idealism which has not yet been realized in this world of strife. But did these idealists know whether the enemy thought as they did, and if he did not, was it not clear that by spreading the notion that we could obtain such a peace at any time, they were leading the way to irreparable disaster, because, since human nature is made that way, they were inevitably

weakening our war spirit, which should at all costs have been strengthened? They made our people yearn for peace, without making the enemy ready for it. In fact, they made peace more difficult of attainment, as the Entente knew all about the state of feeling in our country, and used it for their own purposes. These idealists also impeded the efforts of the General Staff to make the enemy more inclined for peace by those means which alone lead to success in war. In spite of all their idealism they are responsible for the misfortunes of our country.

I know of no time when the attitude of the enemy justified our hope for a fair and just peace by understanding. Everything that has been said or written on this subject is wide of the mark. The Government never indicated to General Headquarters a possible opening for such a peace.

No doubt we could at any moment have had such a peace as has now been forced upon us. What Chancellor, what statesman, what man with true German feeling in his blood would have even thought of it? But everyone might have known perfectly well that no other peace was to be had, and so there was nothing for it but to fight for victory, once the war had started.

Towards the end Count Czernin evidently thought as I did, although he, too, would not admit the truth. In his speech of the 11th December, 1918, he said:

"The best we could hope for was to take advantage of a favourable military situation, such as might still be expected, to propose a peace which, while involving considerable sacrifices, would perhaps have had a chance of being accepted by the enemy. But the more brilliant their successes, the more exacting did the German military leaders become, and after their great victories it was less possible than ever to persuade them to such a policy of renunciation.

"I believe that there actually was one, and only one, moment in the course of this war when such an attempt really seemed very likely to succeed, and that was after the famous battle of Gorlice."

The battle of Gorlice was fought in May, 1915. Subsequently, therefore—according to Count Czernin—there was no chance

of peace at all, even at the cost of considerable sacrifices. And even if there had been a chance, either in May, 1915, or later, not only the German Military Party, but almost the whole German people would have refused it so long as they felt proudly confident of their strength. This confidence and strength should have been fostered by the statesmen, in order to keep the will to victory alive in the country, and preserve it from the immeasurable disaster of defeat. The determination of our enemies being what it was, there could be no middle course. Our will in the matter was of no account. That of the enemy was not yet broken. When this had been effected by military victory the diplomats might talk about reconciliation—if they still wanted to.

IV

For four years the Field-Marshal and I worked together like one man, in the most perfect harmony. With the most profound satisfaction I saw him become the German national hero of this war, the very personification of victory for every German.

The Field-Marshal permitted me to participate in his glory. At the celebration of his 70th birthday on the 2nd October, 1917, he put that sentiment into particularly touching words.

The Commander-in-Chief bears the final responsibility. He bears it before the world, and, what is harder, before himself, his own army and his own country. As Chief of Staff and First Quartermaster-General I shared his responsibility to the fullest extent, and have always been fully conscious of the fact. I am ready to answer for my actions at any time.

Our strategical and tactical views were in complete agreement, and harmonious and confident co-operation was the natural result After discussion with my assistants I used to lay my ideas for the initiation and conduct of all operations briefly and concisely before the Field-Marshal. I have the satisfaction of knowing that from Tannenberg to my resignation in October, 1918, he always agreed with my views and approved my draft orders.

Our conception of the character of this war of nations and the

necessary measures it involved were also identical, and so were our views on the peace question. Like me, he strove to secure the life of the German people against fresh aggression. He put the whole weight of his personality behind these views.

Those to whom the authority of the General Staff was, or might be, an obstacle to the attainment of their own selfish ends sought to drive a wedge between the Field-Marshal and myself. They dared not attack him, so they thought it politic to strike at me. They invented differences between his views and actions and mine. According to them he personified the good principle, I the evil one. Those who spread such notions should at least have made him jointly responsible for all the alleged mischief. Otherwise they undermine his position and obviously present him as a man who could not possibly possess all the great qualities they ascribe to him, qualities he does most certainly possess.

The reputation of the Field-Marshal stands secure enough in the hearts of the German people.

I have always held him in honour and served him faithfully, and I esteem his noble qualities of mind not less highly than his devotion to his King and his readiness to assume responsibility.

V

Mine has been a life of work for our country, the Emperor and the Army. During the four years of war I lived only for the war.

My days followed a regular plan. All the time I was Chief of the Staff in the East and had direct control of troops everything was determined by the requirements of the military situation. I was in the office from six or seven in the morning until late at night.

When I was First Quartermaster-General I used to start work, when the Front was inactive, about eight o'clock. The Field-Marshal arrived perhaps an hour later and we would briefly discuss military events and plans and any pending questions

At twelve noon we made our report to His Majesty the Emperor.

At one sharp we went to luncheon, which lasted half or three-quarters of an hour. Before half-past three I was again in the office. At eight we had dinner, and after an interval of an hour and a half we resumed work until twelve or one at night.

This regular existence was but seldom interrupted. Even during my four or five days' war leave I was not altogether free of duty.

I was in telephonic and telegraphic communication with all parts of the Front and with the General Headquarters of our Allies. The Armies sent in regular morning and evening reports, but continuous reports were furnished when anything unusual occurred.

The Chief of Field Telegraphs in the East, Colonel Lehmann, and later the Chief of Field Telegraphs for the whole Army, Major-General Hesse, rendered me comprehensive and effective assistance. The telephone formations belonging to the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, and the Field Telegraph Service of General Headquarters, which were responsible for the details of intercommunication, worked extraordinarily well.

On the one hand it was necessary to obtain a clear idea of all events that took place on any part of the enormously extended fronts, but on the other it was uncommonly difficult to feel the pulse of the fighting immediately. But it was absolutely essential that General Headquarters should be informed of all important events at once, as only too often the shortage of reserves obliged us to make immediate decisions of the very greatest importance.

The work of commanding the troops, looking after the welfare of the Army and maintaining fighting efficiency at home took precedence of everything else. Questions of future military and political policy were regarded as secondary.

The working hours were absorbed by my own work, reports by my subordinate directors and heads of departments and services, and discussions.

I have the pleasantest memories of our work and social life together, both on my staff in the East and at General Head quarters,

The enormous amount of work and the heavy responsibility which devolved upon me made it imperative for me to surround myself with independent, upright men, on whom I could call to express their opinions freely and frankly. They certainly did so—very emphatically too, on occasions. Our co-operation was based on mutual confidence, and my colleagues ever stood faithfully and firmly by me. They were my active and devoted assistants, imbued with the highest sense of duty. The final decision, of course, rested with me, for responsibility permitted of no hesitation. War demanded rapid action. But decision did not mean despotism, and when I did disagree with the proposals of my assistants I never hurt their feelings. In such cases, and when divergent views had to be reconciled, I endeavoured, without being vague, to recognize the grounds for differences of opinion. The fame and great reputations of my associates have always been a matter of sincere satisfaction to me. I always was, and am still, of the opinion that this war was so tremendous and made such great demands that one man alone could not possibly cope with it. It gave plenty of opportunity for brilliant work.

My chief assistant in the East was Lieut.-Colonel, now Major-General, Hoffmann, an intellectual and progressive officer. My opinion of him as a soldier is best shown by the fact that I suggested him as my successor when I was appointed to General Headquarters at the end of August, 1916. In that position he justified his selection as brilliantly as he had when acting as my senior staff officer.

At General Headquarters I chose Lieut.-Colonel Wetzell to supervise operations. I had met him previously and knew his value. He was familiar with the Western Front, where he had distinguished himself as senior Staff Officer and Chief of Staff of the Third Corps and had done particularly well at Verdun. He has a splendid soldierly spirit and a strong and faithful character. With his enterprising and fertile mind, and the care he put into his work, he proved an excellent and valued assistant. In September, 1918, I found it necessary to redistribute the Staff in order to allow myself a little more leisure;

for this reason, and no other, Lieut.-Colonel Wetzell had to leave me. We separated with the highest regard on both sides.

He was succeeded by Colonel Heye and Major von Stülpnagel. The latter had served on my staff in Berlin for a long time. They were both strong-minded and clear-headed soldiers. With them I passed through the hardest time a soldier can experience; it was the period when it became clear that we could no longer win the war in a military sense. To have to leave them just then was the greatest trial I had to bear.

Questions of organization were dealt with chiefly by Majors von Vollard-Bockelberg and Freiherr von dem Bussche and Frahnert, men with enormous enthusiasm, foresight and capacity for work. Their work was of a high order.

Three of my assistants came prominently before the public This was due to the nature of their work.

Colonel Bauer, a man of remarkable personality, shared my view that the foundations of ultimate success were to be sought in the war-efficiency of the people at home, and did all he could to foster and increase it. He played a decisive part in developing the Artillery. It was his duty to submit demands for war material to the home authorities, and to obtain, with the assistance of employers and workmen, a clear idea of the capability of our industries. His work was closely related to that of the War Ministry.

His co-operation and advice were also of the greatest value in matters of military economy and tactics.

The Head of the Political Department was General von Bartenwerffer, a calm and clear-headed officer, imbued with fervid patriotism. One important duty of the General Staff in the Field was to keep an eye on the military policy of neutrals and enemies, and refer all political questions to which it gave rise to the Imperial Chancellor. It also dealt with political events in the occupied territories, in so far as they were administered by General Headquarters. The frontiers which we might acquire by the war were a matter of the greatest concern to the future security of the country and all questions connected with them formed an important part of the work of General Headquarters

All correspondence relating to peace questions was conducted by the Political Department.

The third was Lieut.-Colonel Nicolai, a man of unfailing industry and devotion to duty, and gifted with organizing talent. His duties were multifarious, perhaps too much so. He was responsible for the military direction of the Press and the cognate duty of watching and fostering the *moral* of the army and the people at home, so far as this could be done by military authority. In both these functions collaboration with the Government authorities was essential. We were unsuccessful, and so, as we knew only too well, the direction of the Press and the enlightenment of the public remained mere patchwork. The military censorship of the Press was another of the functions of Colonel Nicolai and his subordinates. This is one of the necessary evils of war, and from its very nature satisfies nobody. I was very sorry that General Headquarters had to undertake this duty, but all other authorities refused to have anything to do with it.

The other great branch of Lieut.-Colonel Nicolai's work consisted of the Secret Intelligence Service, prevention of spying, supervision of post, telegraph and telephone services, and the adoption of measures against industrial spying and sabotage. Lieut.-Colonel Nicolai's intelligence service was of the greatest value to General Headquarters. Uncertainty is of the very nature of war. Even the enemy, in spite of his far more extensive agencies, never knew our intentions. We always surprised him, except on the 15th July, 1918—an occasion when we made things too easy for him.

Major von Rauch, an experienced and careful staff officer, was at the head of the " Foreign Armies " Section, whose duty it was to collect information about the enemy and make it available for the framing of our plans. He proved himself equal to his responsible task. In this direction also the General Staff did all that could reasonably be expected of it.

On my staff there were many other faithful assistants, and I must more particularly specify Colonels von Tieschowitz and von Mertz, Majors von Waldow, Crantz, von Harbou, Hofmann,

Bartenwerffer, Muths, Captains Wever, Gabriel, Geyer, von Fischer-Treuenfeld, von Goszler, von Posek, There were many others.

We all met together for meals, which were marked by peculiarly intimate and pleasant intercourse. The Field-Marshal was fond of amusing stories and lively conversation. I used to join in, but liked to discuss service matters also. Of course we took the greatest care not to mention anything connected with operations.

We often had visitors, either at meals or only in the office. Sometimes guests appeared during very critical times. I remember in October, 1914, some gentlemen arrived at Radom with a trainload of gifts for the troops and talked about the prospective capture of Warsaw, while at that very moment I was already contemplating retreat. On such occasions guests rather got on our nerves, but generally speaking they cheered us up.

From officers of all arms and belonging to all the divisions on the Front we heard how things were going in the Army, sometimes better than from long official reports. I attached the greatest importance to our keeping in close touch with the Front, and received many hints, which I always followed up. I was particularly fond of these military visits and greatly valued them.

Often we had members of the Government from Berlin and the States of the Empire. The Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, paid us a visit at Posen in the autumn of 1914, and again in February, 1915, at Lötzen. The other Chancellors also came to see us often. Sometimes we had visits from members of the Reichstag. I always had the impression that these gentlemen enjoyed being with us, whatever party they belonged to. Towards them and other private individuals I naturally observed the necessary discretion in speaking of the military situation and my ideas on the subject of peace.

Representatives of industry, commerce, and the Employers' and Workmen's Unions came occasionally and sat at our table.

Neutral military attachés and military missions who were visiting the Front, German and foreign reporters, representatives of the Press, scientists and artists, all visited us at various times

At the table of the Commander-in-Chief in the East representatives from all parts of East and West Prussia were particularly frequent visitors.

Many princes were our guests at various times.

A visit from His Majesty the Emperor was, of course, a special honour. Even then conversation was unrestrained, and we felt that His Majesty liked to be with us.

I was particularly pleased to have guests at meals, because it gave me an opportunity of bringing up various questions that required discussion. In this way I saved time later for other military duties.

VI

Strength of will and foresight are needed for the command of armies; but an intimate knowledge of the composition and organization of the mighty instrument is also necessary, and this can only be acquired and retained by unremitting work. There is yet another requirement, an understanding of the *moral* of one's own troops and of the peculiarities of the enemy. That cannot be acquired by work; it is, like so many other things, a matter of personality. The greater the task, the more important do these moral factors become. Confidence and faith in ultimate victory are the bonds which unite the leader and his troops.

The Group and Army commands displayed initiative and understanding in assisting us in our extremely arduous task. We always maintained a constant interchange of views with them, although the final decision rested with us. General Headquarters had, further, to smooth out difficulties and to preserve a certain unity of view on the many matters which make up the life of an army. The frequent transfers of troops made this particularly important.

Subject to these necessary limitations each Command was independent within its own sphere. This was more the case during the war of movement or attack than in stationary warfare and defence. Tactical situations did, of course, arise in which

the views of the Commands did not agree in matters of detail with those of General Headquarters. The local Command was in such cases often allowed to decide the question. For me this always involved a mental struggle ; if they were successful I was pleased, but if they were not I felt it was my fault.

I attached the greatest importance to verbal discussion and gathering direct impressions on the spot. I used to like going to the Front, and as First Quartermaster-General always had a special train with separate office and telegraph coaches. Work did not cease during the journey. At pre-arranged stations the daily reports were handed in as they were at General Headquarters, and, if necessary, we could communicate with wherever we wanted.

My personal relations with both Staffs and troops were harmonious. I enjoyed much confidence.

Among my happiest recollections are my relations with the Headquarters of the German Crown Prince. He showed a great aptitude for the profession of arms, and asked clever and very informed questions. He was fond of the men and did all he could for them. He was not in favour of the war but advocated peace. That is the truth, whatever others may say to the contrary. The Crown Prince always regretted that he had been insufficiently prepared for his future office as Emperor, and took all possible pains to make good this deficiency. He once told me that he was worse off than a clerk in that respect. He drew up a memorandum on the subject, which he handed to his Imperial father and the Imperial Chancellor.

The Crown Prince was the victim of the false impression he produced ; there was more in him than appeared on the surface.

The Chief of the Staff of the German Crown Prince's Army Group, Colonel Count von der Schulenburg, a very clear-headed and energetic officer, always gave me sound and reliable support.

I often visited the Army Group of Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria also. His alert and uncommonly industrious Chief of Staff, General von Kuhl, was an acquaintance of long standing ; I had more than one opportunity of admiring his calm self possession even in very serious situations.

It would take too long to mention by name the other Groups and Armies. But I cannot omit a reference to General von Loszberg. This eminent officer and tactician often rendered the greatest assistance to the Army and his country. His confidence in me afforded me special satisfaction.

During my visits to the Front the various Chiefs of Staff explained the situation to me, in the presence of their Army Commanders. They always spoke as freely as if they had been officers at General Headquarters. They knew I wanted to hear their real views and have a clear idea of the true situation, not a favourable report made to order. Sometimes the Armies were instructed to report bare facts only, whether favourable or unfavourable.

After the general statement we would discuss matters and the Army Commanders would join in, unless they had explained the situation themselves, an alternative which I particularly appreciated. As a rule I used to extend my visit and this enabled me to discuss every kind of question with the Army Commanders.

My intercourse with the Armies was not limited to the weekly journeys. Every morning I spoke on the telephone with the Chiefs of Staff of the Armies and was admitted to their apprehensions and their hopes. They frequently had requests to submit, and they knew that I would help them if I could. I have often had to give them encouragement, but I always felt that they went back to their heavy task with all the more confidence. At times one got a better and fairer general impression of the strategical and tactical situation from the office chair than one could on the spot, where personal impressions had so much greater influence.

My conversations on the telephone had the object of collecting information. Only in cases of emergency did I issue orders on these occasions, and then they were always confirmed in writing to the Headquarters concerned.

It was an understood thing that these conversations were reported to the Army Commanders. I strongly objected to a "Chief of Staff's Command," besides, the Army Commanders

themselves were men of far too independent character to tolerate such a situation.

I did hear of cases where orders were given on the authority of General Headquarters which I would never have approved of; whenever it occurred I took strong measures.

When I was unable to see for myself, General Headquarters dispatched officers of the General Staff to collect reports from the Front, or from Army Headquarters, so that we might obtain as clear a picture as possible of the situation on the spot.

Changes in the personnel of the higher commands were unavoidable. They were submitted by the Army Commands to the Chief of the Military Cabinet, in the case of the General Staff to the Chief of the General Staff. On occasions General Headquarters suggested changes.

This had to be done when it became necessary to have specially experienced officers at the most critical points. It was of advantage to the operations and particularly to the troops, as it saved many lives.

Exchanges between Army and other superior Commands also took place during particularly prolonged periods of fighting, more especially if things were going against us. Such periods imposed a terrible nervous strain on them. Worn-out Corps Headquarters were replaced by others. The change was awkward, but its drawbacks were not insuperable. Complete Army Headquarters could not be relieved, as this would have caused too much dislocation in every direction, especially in the work of supply. The only remedy was to relieve individuals. The difficulties involved were the lesser evil of the two.

Occasionally, at the suggestion of General Headquarters, Army Commanders and their Chiefs of Staff were relieved, when we could be reasonably certain that neither the command nor the troops would suffer from the change. In a war of this duration a certain loss of energy in individual cases was inevitable. To our great satisfaction, however, such cases were a rarity. It is always a most difficult task to deal with them, and, however conscientious one wishes to be, it is impossible to perform it at all without inflicting hardship, and even an injustice at times. As

far as possible I accepted any counter-suggestions put forward, but if our cause suffered thereby I incurred blame of which no one could relieve me.

Deeply moved by the events of the 8th August, 1918, I placed my post at the disposal of the Field-Marshal. There is no question that the terrible disappointments towards the end of the war had worn me out, but my nerves never gave way under the strain.

LIÉGE

I

THE favourite recollection of my life as a soldier is the *coup de main* on the fortress. It was a bold operation, in which I was able to fight just like any soldier of the rank and file who proves his worth in battle.

At the outbreak of war I was Brigade Commander at Strasburg. For a long time I had been on the General Staff and latterly, from March, 1904, to January, 1913, with only one short interval, in the Operations Department, of which I was then Chief. There I gained an insight into our preparations for war and the relative strength of the opposing forces. My principal work was strategic concentration, the directions for which were given by the Chief of the Staff himself.

The scheme of deployment which was inaugurated in August, 1914, was conceived by General Count von Schlieffen, one of the greatest soldiers who ever lived. It was based on the assumption that France would not respect Belgian neutrality or that Belgium would join France. On this assumption the advance of the German main forces through Belgium followed as a matter of course. Any other plan of campaign would have been crippled owing to the danger from Belgium to the German right flank, and would have precluded a quick and decisive blow at France, which was essential in order to meet in time the great danger of a Russian invasion into the heart of Germany. In the assumed military situation, as countless war-games had abundantly demonstrated, an offensive against Russia, with simul-

taneous defensive operations in the West, implied, as a matter of course, a long war, and was, therefore, rejected by Count von Schlieffen.

When there was no longer any doubt as to the attitude of France and Belgium, Count von Schlieffen's scheme was carried into execution.

As to how far General von Moltke conferred with the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann, on the question of a march through Belgium I do not know. In any case, no such negotiations were ever conducted through my department, as it was not a matter with which it was concerned. Whether the Deputy Chiefs of Staff had been consulted is also quite unknown to me. We were all convinced of the soundness of this plan. Nobody believed in Belgium's neutrality.

In our unfavourable military-political position in the centre of Europe, surrounded by enemies, we had to reckon with foes greatly superior in numbers and prepare ourselves accordingly, if we did not wish to allow ourselves to be crushed. It was well known how Russia pressed for war and continually increased her army. She was intent on humbling Austria-Hungary once and for all, and becoming mistress of the Balkans. In France the thought of revenge had revived with renewed vigour ; the old German Reichsland was to become French again. Among many other events in France, the reinstatement of the three years' compulsory service left no doubt of that country's intentions. England contemplated our economic ascendancy, our cheap labour and our restless industry with distinct uneasiness. Moreover, Germany was the greatest land power in Europe, and at the same time had a good fleet in course of expansion. This is what made England fear for her world hegemony. The Anglo-Saxon felt his ancient supremacy threatened. The English Government concentrated its fleet, which had had its base of operations until recently in the Mediterranean, in the North Sea and English Channel. Lloyd George's menacing speech on July 21st, 1911, threw a vivid and sudden light on England's intentions which had hitherto been concealed with great skill. It became increasingly certain that war would be

forced upon us and that it would be a struggle the like of which the world had never seen. The fact that in non-military circles the probable strength of the enemy was under-estimated constituted a real danger.

At the eleventh hour, in the autumn of 1912, when there was no longer any doubt as to the enemy's intentions and the Army was working with might and main with truly German devotion to duty, I drew up a plan for an important increase in our effectives which met with approval from both the more discerning sections of the public and the more far-sighted among our Parliamentary parties. I was able to induce General von Moltke to approach the Imperial Chancellor with the plan, who must himself have considered the situation exceedingly serious, for he immediately agreed to it. He instructed the Minister for War to prepare a Bill, without, however, carrying on at the same time any clearly defined and systematic political campaign calculated to gauge correctly the attitude of the various Powers. This should have occurred to him as a necessary conclusion. Having regard to the purposes for which it was conceived, this Army Estimate for a milliard marks was not of an aggressive character. It merely aimed at adjusting the disproportion in the numerical strength, and had in view the absolute enforcement of universal compulsory service, for there were still thousands of able-bodied men who did not serve their country. The Budget provided for personnel, but more especially for the strengthening of our fortifications and for more *matériel.* All this was voted, but what I had most earnestly desired, the addition of three new army corps, was given no consideration; it did not even appear in the Estimate. The failure to provide these three additional army corps was paid for dearly later on. At the beginning of the war these additional corps were sorely missed, and the new formations which were produced in the autumn of 1914 displayed all the defects of improvisation. Later on, the new formations were made stronger at the start, but the existing corps, on the other hand, were weakened by the contributions they were called upon to make.

However, before the whole Bill was passed, I was transferred

to Düsseldorf, as Commanding Officer of the 39th Fusiliers. I attributed the change partly to my having pressed for those three additional army corps.

II

Regimental work is full of life and activity. Active dealings and constant and close co-operation with and for the men who were entrusted to my care, the training of officers, N.C.O.'s and men and the military education of the youth to manhood, particularly attracted me after a long period of Staff work. For thirteen years I had had nothing to do with the routine of a regiment. Now my chief work was the inspection of recruits. In the eighties of the last century I had on seven different occasions had charge of recruits—with the 57th Infantry Regiment in old Wesel, and with the Marine Infantry in Wilhelmshaven and Kiel. Later on I had done several weeks' service with the 8th Body-Grenadier Regiment in Frankfort-on-the-Oder, and from 1898 to 1900 I was in charge of a company of the 61st Infantry Regiment in Thorn—a time I shall never forget. Now that I was in Düsseldorf, I was glad of the experience gained during those years.

I realized all the more the great responsibility which rested on me as Commanding Officer of the regiment, as I saw the coming war rapidly approaching. In various addresses to my officers I pointed out what extremely serious times we lived in. In the Army I saw, not only the assurance of Germany's safety and future, but also a guarantee of internal peace. In 1913—thank God !—there was not the least sign that the Army would have to be used in *that* capacity.

Discipline, to which officer and private alike were subjected, was, in my opinion, the only basis on which an army could be effectively trained for war. Such a training could only be acquired through long service. It is only what discipline makes second nature in a man that is lasting, and survives even the demoralizing impressions of the battle-field and the psychological changes wrought by a long campaign. It was our thorough

discipline and training in peace-time which was to make up for our inferiority in numbers in the coming war.

My aim was to turn highly-disciplined troops into responsible men possessed of initiative. Discipline is not intended to kill character, but to develop it. The purpose of discipline is to bring about uniformity in co-operating for the attainment of a common goal, and this uniformity can only be obtained when each one sets aside the thought of his own personal interests. This common goal is—Victory. Words fail to describe the demands that are made of a soldier in battle. To go " over the top " under enemy fire is, indeed, an heroic act, but it is by no means the most difficult. How much resolution and readiness to shoulder responsibility is required of a man who either has to lead or send others to certain death. Those are acts the appalling nature of which no one can imagine who has not himself had to perform them.

Besides the care of the men and the education of the non-commissioned officers—an education which was also calculated to assist them in their future callings—I attached the greatest importance to increasing the efficiency of the Officers' Corps and the training of the younger officers. While the personnel of the Regular Officers' Corps is always the same, the officers of the Reserve, the N.C.O.'s and men change continually. So the Officers' Corps is the mainspring of the Army. The officers must therefore be thoroughly conversant with the Army's great deeds and possess a comprehensive knowledge of their country's history, as it is expected of all men who have to lead others. Nothing can be torn from its historical context without serious prejudice. No one should forget that in times of danger the guardianship of the fortunes of the State devolves upon the officer, supported by the N.C.O. This explains the exclusiveness of the Officers' Corps and their holding aloof from political life.

I aimed at making my officers conversant with the conditions of modern warfare and endeavoured to strengthen in them that self-assurance which is essential to the fulfilment of their difficult task, but must not develop into arrogance.

I zealously devoted myself to the training and education of the regiment and afterwards had the satisfaction of learning that it proved its worth in the face of the enemy. It was a great pleasure to me when, in the course of the war, I was first placed *à la suite* of my regiment, and, later, appointed its colonel. At the time of my resignation it was named after me; I am, indeed, proud of the General Ludendorff Fusilier Regiment.

In April, 1914, I went to Strasburg, where General von Deimling's presence ensured an active military life for every man in his command. The position as Brigade Commander was quite different from that of Regimental Commander in Düsseldorf. I missed the direct intercourse with the troops and the Corps of Officers and was occupied chiefly with organization. Before the outbreak of war I had the pleasure of parading my brigade for inspection at Bitsch.

There was again a question of my being appointed as Quartermaster-General on the Great General Staff; I was, of course, doing General Staff work. In May I took part in a Staff ride, which began in Freiburg in Breisgau and ended in Cologne. His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince was with us. He devoted himself with great zeal to his work and showed both sound understanding of military affairs and insight into large-scale operations. In August I had to conduct a so-called "Supply Ride," in which the strategical plan for the supply of an army was examined.

Austria-Hungary's Note to Serbia at the end of July came as a shock to me in Strasburg; nobody could ignore its seriousness. War was soon a certainty. Diplomacy presented the German Army with an extremely difficult task. In great anxiety I followed events in Berlin then as I still do, feeling that so far as I was concerned I was not responsible for whatever happened.

III

General mobilization was decreed on August 1st. My wife went to Berlin immediately, for the families of all officers and officials were ordered to leave Strasburg. During the whole

four years of war we were unable to set up a home of our own, and I was never able to pay any but short flying visits to my wife. My family had little consideration during these momentous days, for all my time was occupied by my work.

Early on the 2nd of August I travelled, with my horses, via Cologne, to Aix-la-Chapelle, which I reached on the same evening. Under mobilization orders I was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army, then commanded by General von Bülow, with General von Lauenstein as his Chief of Staff.

Next I had to join General von Emmich, who had been given the task of taking the fortress of Liége by surprise, the troops for this purpose being composed of some quickly mobilized mixed infantry brigades which had not been brought up to full strength. By this move it was intended to clear a way through Belgium for the Army.

I took up my quarters in Aix-la-Chapelle at the Hotel Union.

Early on August 3rd, General von Emmich arrived. I had not previously met this distinguished soldier, but from that time onwards I cherished a feeling of deep esteem for him which lasted until the day of his death. His Chief of Staff was Colonel Count von Lambsdorff, a brilliant officer who won great distinction at Liége and elsewhere.

Early on August 4th the advance over the Belgian frontier began, while in Berlin the Reichstag, in a patriotic demonstration, voted its support to the Government, and the party leaders, after the Speech from the Throne had been read, vociferously proclaimed their unconditional allegiance to the Kaiser, come what might. The same day I had my first experience of fighting in an engagement near Visé, close to the Dutch frontier. It was evident that Belgium had long been prepared for our advance. The roads had been systematically pulled up and barricaded, showing that a great deal of work had been done beforehand. No such obstacles could be found (by us) on the south-west frontier of Belgium. Why had Belgium not taken similar precautions against France?

The question as to whether we could secure the bridges at Visé intact was one of special importance. I went on to visit

von der Marwitz's cavalry, which was then on its way to the town, but was able to advance only slowly, because one barricade after another barred the way. At my request a cyclist company was sent to reconnoitre. After a short while a cyclist returned with the news that the company had entered Visé and been completely annihilated. I went with two men to see for myself, and to my joy I found the company intact with the exception of the leader, who had been badly wounded by a shot fired from the opposite bank of the Meuse. This little episode was useful to me later on, for it taught me to be more sceptical of such *canards*, or, as they were subsequently called, L. of C. yarns.

The beautiful Meuse bridges had been destroyed; Belgium was ready for war.

I was in Hervé the same evening, my first headquarters on enemy soil. We spent the night at an inn opposite the station. The whole town was intact and we went to bed with a quiet mind. During the night I was awakened by brisk firing, some of which was directed on our house. The *franc-tireur* warfare in Belgium had begun. It broke out everywhere the next day, and it was this sort of thing which aroused that intense bitterness that during those first years characterized the war on the Western front in contrast to the feeling prevailing in the East. The Belgian Government took a grave responsibility upon itself. It had systematically organized civilian warfare. The *Garde Civique*, which in the days of peace had its own arms and special uniforms, were able to appear sometimes in one garb and sometimes in another. The Belgian soldiers must also have had a special civilian suit in their knapsacks at the commencement of the war. In the trenches near Fort Barchon, to the north-east of Liége, I myself saw uniforms which had been left behind by soldiers who had fought there.

Such action was not in keeping with the usages of war; our troops cannot be blamed if they took the sternest measures to suppress it. It is true that innocent persons may have had to suffer, but the stories of "*Belgian Atrocities*" are nothing but clever, elaborate and widely-advertised legends and the

Belgian Government can alone be held responsible. For my part, I had taken the field with chivalrous and humane conceptions of warfare. This *franc-tireur* warfare was bound to disgust any soldier. My soldierly spirit suffered bitter disillusion.

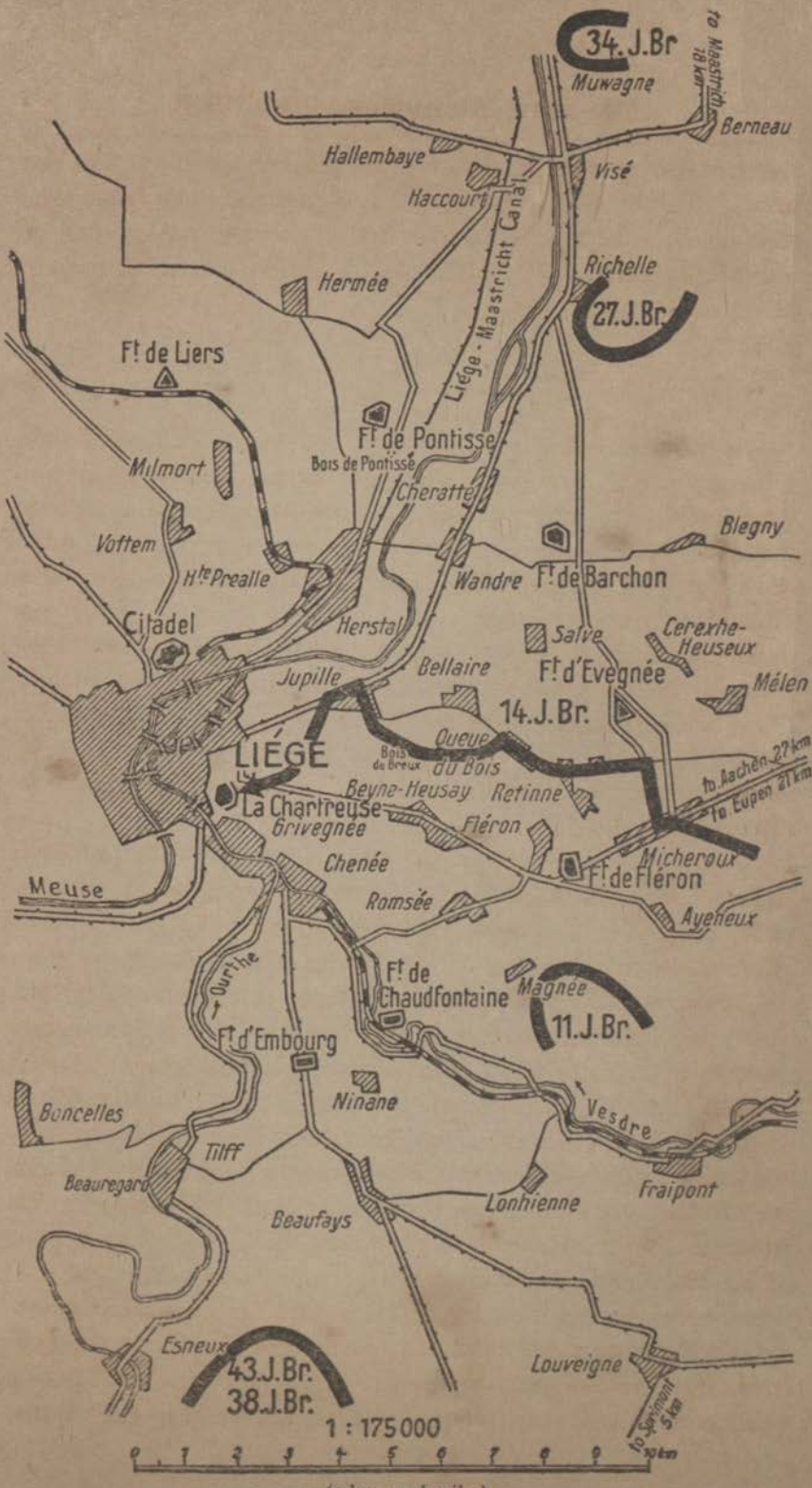
IV

The advance brigades had, indeed, a difficult task to accomplish at Liége. It was certainly an extraordinarily bold plan to penetrate the girdle of forts right into the heart of a modern fortress. The troops felt nervous; from conversations with the officers, I gathered that their faith in the success of this undertaking was only slight.

In the night of the 5th–6th August the advance on Liége, through its fortifications, began. The action in all its details has already been described by the General Staff in a pamphlet published by Stalling of Oldenburg. It is not my intention to go over this ground again, for I wish to set down my personal experiences only.

Towards midnight of the 5th–6th, General von Emmich left Hervé. We rode to Micheroux, about two or three kilometres from Fort Fléron, where the 14th Infantry Brigade, under Major-General von Wussow, were assembling. Under cover of the darkness the troops, taking with them the unfamiliar but invaluable field kitchens, were collecting in a very unsoldierly manner on a road which could easily have been swept by the guns of the fort. As it was, they were shot at from a house to the south of the road. A regular battle ensued, but the fort itself did not open fire, which was a miracle. About one o'clock the advance began. It was to take us north of Fort Fléron via Retinne through the line of forts, and then on to the heights of La Chartreuse, on the outskirts of the town. We were due there early in the morning. The other brigades which were to break through the girdle of forts at other points were to reach the town at the same hour.

General von Emmich's Staff was almost at the end of the



(1 km. = ⅝ mile.)

Fig. 1. Liége. Situation on the evening of August 6th, 1914.

column. Suddenly there was a longish halt. I pushed my way to the front. There was no apparent reason for the halt, which proved to have been due to a most regrettable misunderstanding of the situation. I myself was really only a spectator, and had no authority to give orders. It was my duty only to report the events at Liége when I met my General later on, and also to co-ordinate General von Emmich's plans with General von Bülow's probable disposition. I put the column in motion again and remained at its head. In the meantime, we had lost touch with the troops in front. We had considerable trouble in finding our way in the pitch darkness, but at length reached Retinne. We were still out of touch with the others. I started out from the village at the head of the column, and took the wrong road. We were immediately fired at, and men fell right and left. I shall never forget hearing the thud of bullets striking human bodies. We made some rushes at the invisible enemy, but the firing became more intense. It was not easy to take our bearings in the dark, but there was no doubt that we had gone astray. The essential thing was to get out of range, and this was unfortunate, because the men could only think that I was afraid. But there was nothing else to be done—higher things were at stake. I crept back and gave my men the order to follow me to the outskirts of the village.

Once back at Retinne, I found the right road. Here I saw General von Wussow's orderly with his horses. He thought that the General had fallen. With a handful of men I took the right road, the high road leading to Queue du Bois. Suddenly there was firing ahead. Machine-gun bullets swept the road but did not harm us. A little further on we came across a heap of dead and wounded German soldiers, who proved to be some of the advance party with General von Wussow. They must have run into machine-gun fire earlier on. I collected some men of the 4th Jäger Battalion and the 27th Infantry Regiment who were gradually arriving and decided to take over the command of the brigade. The first thing was to destroy the enemy's machine-guns firing down the road. Captains von Harbou and Brinckmann, of the General Staff, pushed their way, with

a few brave men, through the hedges and farms on both sides of the road, and fell upon the guns. The strong gun-team surrendered and the road was clear.

We continued on our way and soon were engaged in heavy house-to-house fighting in Queue du Bois. Gradually it became light. I went on ahead with a few men, the two Staff Captains, Major von Marcard, commanding the 4th Rifles, Major von Greiff, commanding the 2nd Detachment of the 4th Field Regiment, and his excellent Adjutant, Lieut. Neide. A field howitzer was brought up; then a second. They fired right and left into the houses and so cleared the streets. Little by little we advanced. The men were reluctant to proceed and I was often compelled to exhort them not to leave me to go on alone. At last the village lay behind us. The inhabitants had fled, and it was now a question of fighting the regular Belgian Army.

As we came out of the village we could distinguish a column marching along the Meuse in the direction of Liége. I hoped it was the 27th Infantry Brigade, but they turned out to be Belgians who were retreating aimlessly over the Meuse rather than face us. It was a long time before the situation was clear, and in the meanwhile my forces were strengthened by the arrival of the men who had been left behind.

We had successfully broken through the girdle of forts. The 165th Infantry Regiment, under its distinguished Commanding Officer, the then Colonel von Oven, pushed on in close order. General von Emmich arrived, and the advance on La Chartreuse was continued.

General von Emmich placed at my disposal other parts of the 11th Infantry Brigade, who were further south, in the belief that they also had broken through. Our advance continued without incident.

We could see the works on the north side of Liége as we climbed out of the Meuse valley to the heights east of La Chartreuse. It was about two o'clock when the brigade arrived there. Guns were at once trained on the town, and a shot was fired now and again, partly as a signal to the other brigades

partly to intimidate the Governor of the fortress and the inhabitants. But I had to be exceedingly sparing of the ammunition, for we were very short. The troops were exhausted and much weakened by the hard fighting; officers had lost their horses, and the field kitchens had been left behind. I rested the brigade and provided for them as best I could by commandeering supplies from the neighbouring houses. General von Emmich soon rejoined us.

From the heights east of La Chartreuse we had a fine view of the town lying at our feet. The citadel on the far bank of the Meuse stood out prominently. Suddenly white flags fluttered from it. General von Emmich wanted to send an officer with a flag of truce. I proposed waiting for the enemy's envoy, but the General adhered to his decision, and Captain von Harbou rode into the town. He returned at seven p.m., and reported that the white flag had been flown against the Governor's will. It was then too late to advance into the town. We had a heavy night ahead of us. Meanwhile I had let the brigade take up a position. Our situation was exceedingly serious. No news reached us from the other brigades, not even from the IIth, and no dispatch-riders got through. It became increasingly clear that the brigade was isolated within the circle of forts, cut off from the outer world. We had to reckon with hostile attacks. The thousand odd Belgian prisoners we had with us increased our difficulties. When we found out that the old work of La Chartreuse, just below us, was unoccupied, I sent a company there with these prisoners. The company commander must have doubted my sanity.

As darkness fell, the nervousness of the troops increased. I went round the front, exhorting them to keep steady and hold fast. The assurance, "We shall be in Liége to-morrow," restored their spirits.

General von Emmich and his staff found quarters in a little farmhouse.

I shall never forget the night of the 6th–7th August. It was cold and as I had left my kit behind, Major von Marcard gave me his cloak. I was very anxious and listened feverishly for

the sound of fighting. I still hoped that at least one brigade had broken through the girdle of forts. But all was quiet, though every half-hour or so a howitzer shell fell into the town. The suspense was unbearable. About ten p.m. I ordered Captain Ott, with a Jäger company, to seize the bridges over the Meuse, in order to make them available for our further advance, and also give us advanced posts. The captain looked at me—and went. The company reached its objective without any fighting, but no reports came back.

Morning broke. I went to General von Emmich, and discussed the situation with him. We still adhered to our decision to enter the town, but the General would not at that moment fix the time. His order to me to enter the town reached me soon after, whilst I was doing something to improve the position of the brigade, and trying to reach the road by which the 11th Brigade would come up. Colonel von Oven was in charge of the advance guard; the rest of the brigade, with the prisoners, followed at a certain distance, headed by General von Emmich with his Staff and myself with the Brigade Staff. As we entered, many scattered Belgian soldiers surrendered.

Colonel von Oven was to occupy the citadel. As a result of the reports he received, he decided not to do this, but to take the road towards Fort Loncin, on the north-west side of the town, and take up a position at that exit from Liége. Thinking that Colonel von Oven was in possession of the citadel, I went there with the Brigade Adjutant in a Belgian car which I had commandeered. When I arrived no German soldier was to be seen and the citadel was still in the hands of the enemy. I banged on the gates, which were locked. They were opened from inside. The few hundred Belgians who were there surrendered at my summons.

The brigade now came up and took possession of the citadel, which I immediately put in a state of defence.

My self-imposed task was now at an end, and I could ask General von Emmich to release me. I intended to leave the fortress by the way I had come, as I wanted to report what had happened to Army Headquarters, ascertain the whereabouts of

the other brigades, and give directions for the bringing up of the artillery against the forts. While I was still in the citadel, several hundred German soldiers turned up who had been taken prisoners and were now freed. The leading units of the 34th Infantry Brigade had broken through to the west bank of the Meuse. The action had then been broken off, so that the successful detachment had been taken prisoner. This brigade now arrived, and subsequently the 11th and 27th, so that when I left General von Emmich he had quite a respectable force at his disposal. On the other hand, news reached us that the French were approaching from Namur, so the situation was still extremely serious. In fact, it could only be regarded as saved when some of the eastern forts had fallen.

V

My leave-taking from General von Emmich moved me deeply. I started at seven o'clock for Aix-la-Chapelle and had a somewhat peculiar journey. A man of the *Garde Civique* offered to take me there. He selected a car, but I declined it. The car I ultimately took broke down before we were out of the citadel, and so I had no choice but to trust myself blindly to the Belgian soldier. For a time all went well. We passed through Hervé, where I found that my former headquarters and the station had been burnt down. On reaching German territory, the driver stopped suddenly and told me he could not go any further. Availing myself of various modes of conveyance, I reached Aix-la-Chapelle late at night with my Belgian soldier. At the Hotel Union I was greeted as one risen from the dead. My orderly, Rudolph Peters, who served me faithfully for six long years, was there with my heavy baggage. His greatest ambition was to get the Iron Cross, but as this would have been contrary to my views on the subject, it was not given him. I had a hasty meal in Aix-la-Chapelle, and then started off into the night on my search for the brigades. I had not had my clothes off for nearly ninety hours. By chance I came across my old regiment, which had

been hurriedly railed up to help at Liége, I understood that General Headquarters in Berlin had been entertaining the gravest fears for our safety.

The situation of the troops in the citadel was certainly critical. I was very anxious about them, but the tension relaxed as the enemy remained inactive.

The chronicle of the subsequent events at Liége is the province of official history. I may mention, however, that I happened to assist at the capture of Fort Pontisse, on the north front, and arrived at Fort Loncin just as it fell. It had been hit by a shell from one of our 42 cm. howitzers. The magazine had been blown up and the whole work collapsed. A number of dazed and blackened Belgian soldiers crawled out of the ruins, accompanied by some Germans who had been taken prisoner on the night of the 5th–6th August. All bleeding, they came towards us with their hands up, stammering out, "*Ne pas tuer, ne pas tuer!*" ("Don't kill, don't kill!"). . . . We were no Huns. Our men fetched water to refresh our enemies.

We gradually got possession of all the works, just in time to enable the right wing of the German Army to continue its march over the Meuse into Belgium without hindrance. A great load was taken off my mind.

I always regard it as a special favour of fate that I was able to be present at the taking of Liége, if only because I had worked on the plan of attack in peace time and had always been impressed with the importance of the operation. His Majesty bestowed on me the Order *Pour le Mérite* for my leadership of the brigade. Of course General von Emmich received it too, as General Officer in Command, for his was the responsibility. Besides, the taking of Liége was not a one-man feat, but the result of the co-operation of a number, and the glory of reducing the fortress must be divided among them.

I took part in the further advance into Belgium in my capacity as Deputy Chief of Staff and thus had an opportunity of gaining a thorough insight into all questions affecting the supply of an army, knowledge which made my subsequent position as Chief of Staff much easier. In my journeyings through the country,

I came to Andenne, where I saw a gruesome and distressing example of the devastation that follows *franc-tireur* operations.

On August 21st I was present at the crossing of the Sambre, by the 2nd Guards Division, west of Namur. The preliminaries of the action were carried through quite smoothly. It was wonderful to see the magnificent men of the Augusta Regiment go into battle.

On the morning of August 22nd I received my call to the East.

CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF ON THE EASTERN FRONT

22nd August, 1914, *to 28th August*, 1916.

TANNENBERG

(MAPS I. AND II.)

I

THE letters from General von Moltke and General von Stein summoning me to General Headquarters at Coblenz, and informing me that I had been appointed Chief of Staff of the 8th Army in East Prussia, were handed to me by Captain von Rochow at nine in the morning of the 22nd August, at the Headquarters of the 2nd Army, half-way between Wavre and Namur.

General von Moltke's letter ran:

"You have before you a new and difficult task, perhaps even more difficult than that of storming Liége. . . . I know no other man in whom I have such absolute trust. You may yet be able to save the situation in the East. You must not be angry with me for calling you away from a post in which you are, perhaps, on the threshold of a decisive action, which, please God, will be conclusive. This is yet another sacrifice you are called upon to make for the Fatherland. The Kaiser, too, has confidence in you. Of course, you will not be made responsible for what has already happened, but with your energy you can prevent the worst from happening. So answer this new call, which is the greatest compliment that can be paid any soldier I know that you will not belie the trust reposed in you."

General von Stein, who was at that time Quartermaster-General, and later became Minister of War, concluded his letter by saying:

"You must go, therefore. The interests of the State make it imperative. Your task is a difficult one, but you are equal to it."

From Captain von Rochow I learnt that General von Hindenburg was to be Commander-in-Chief, but that it was not yet known where he was to be found or whether he would accept the post.

I was proud of my new task and of the trust placed in me, as revealed by the two letters. I was exalted at the thought of serving my Emperor, Army and Fatherland, in a position of great responsibility at a most critical point. Love of country, loyalty to my Sovereign, appreciation of the truth that the duty of everyone is to devote his life to his family and the State, this was the heritage which I took with me from my home as my portion in life. My parents were not wealthy; their devoted efforts had not brought them any material reward. Our happy and harmonious family life was conducted on very economical and simple lines. Both my father and my mother sacrificed their all in providing for their six children. I take this opportunity of thanking them before the whole world.

I had to fight my way honourably through life when I was a young officer, but my enjoyment did not suffer on that account. Much of my time was spent in my simple subaltern's quarters in Wesel, Wilhelmshaven and Kiel, reading works on history, military history and geography. The knowledge I had acquired as a boy developed and bore fruit. I learned to be proud of my Fatherland and its great men., and ardently worshipped at the shrine of Bismarck's powerful and passionate genius.

The work of our Reigning House in Prussia and Germany stood out in the clearest relief. The allegiance I had pledged on oath developed into a feeling of deep personal devotion. As I followed history step by step, I became more and more convinced that

the safety of the country essentially depended on the Army and Navy, in view of the fact that Germany had again and again been the battlefield of Europe. At the same time, my survey of life around me enabled me to discern the greatness and significance

Fig. 2. Tannenberg. Situation on August 22nd, 1914.

of the peaceful services rendered by the Fatherland to civilization and mankind.

My practical work for the Army began in 1904, when I was appointed to the Concentration Department of the Great General Staff. The culmination of my work there was my proposal for the milliard mark bill.

For a long time my mobilization orders had appointed me Director of Military Operations at General Headquarters; but, of course, this was changed when I took over the command of the Regiment in Düsseldorf. My successor on the Staff was appointed to that position. I valued my position as Deputy Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army (to which I was appointed on mobilization) because of Liége, but otherwise it was not particularly attractive.

Under the leadership of General von Moltke, I had taken part in many General Staff rides, and had there gained deep insight into the art of war on a large scale. My new position offered me an opportunity, though only in a comparatively small field of action, of proving whether I understood how to apply the teachings of that great teacher of the General Staff, General Count von Schlieffen. No soldier could have had a better chance given him. But I was deeply distressed that my appointment was the outcome of such a serious situation for my country. My patriotic feelings and heartfelt convictions spurred me to action.

Within a quarter of an hour I was on my way in a car to Coblenz. I passed through Wavre. Only the day before it had been a peaceful town. Now it was in flames. Here, also, the populace had fired on our troops. That was my farewell to Belgium.

I arrived at Coblenz at six o'clock in the evening and immediately reported to General von Moltke, who was looking worn. Here I learnt further details of the situation in the East. On the 20th of August, the 8th Army had attacked the Russian Niemen Army, under General Rennenkampf, near Gumbinnen. This movement had, in spite of initial successes, not resulted in any decisive victory and had to be broken off. Since then the Army between Lake Mauer and the river Pregel was in full retreat westwards over the river Angerapp and, to the north of the Pregel, behind the river Deime, the first line of defence of the fortress of Königsberg. The 1st Army Corps was to be brought by rail from stations west of Insterburg to Gosslershausen and be placed at the disposal of the Army Command, while the 3rd

Reserve Division was to be taken from Angerberg to the Allenstein-Hohenstein front to reinforce the 20th Army Corps.

The line of lakes from Nikolaiken to Lötzen, which was only slightly fortified, was in our hands; only weak enemy forces had approached it.

General von Scholtz, commanding the 20th Army Corps, was in charge on the southern frontier of East Prussia. In the course of continuous engagements with the Russian Narew Army, under Samsonoff, he had concentrated around and to the east of Gilgenburg, his own divisions, the 70th Landwehr Brigade (which was still under his command) and part of the garrisons of Thorn and the other Vistula fortresses. The enemy was pressing him very heavily.

We had to reckon with an advance of the two enemy armies on both sides of the chain of lakes. General von Moltke informed me that the 8th Army was proposing to evacuate the whole country east of the Vistula; only the fortresses were to retain their war garrisons and be defended. The 8th Army had no doubt adopted this plan in the expectation of a speedy decision in the West, when East Prussia could be reconquered with the help of reinforcements from the West and the invading Army driven back. This scheme had often been practised by Count von Schlieffen in strategical war-games. If the assumption was correct, the decision of the 8th Army to spare itself for later operations was sound.

It did not allow for the realities of war, nor did it take into account the immense responsibility of exposing part of one's country to invasion. The amount of suffering inflicted on countries that form the actual theatre of operations, even under the most humane conditions of warfare, has once more been brought home to humanity by this world war.

As events were shaping, retreat behind the Vistula would have spelt ruin. We should not have been able to hold the Vistula line against the numerically superior forces of the Russians, and it would certainly have been impossible for us to give direct help to the Austrians in September. Their collapse would certainly have followed. The situation, as I found it,

was indeed very serious, but, after all, the problem was not insoluble.

At my request, orders were immediately sent to the East Front fixing the retreat of the main body of the 8th Army for the 23rd inst. The 1st Reserve Corps, the 17th Army Corps and the Main Reserve of the Königsberg garrison were to call a halt. The 1st A.C. was not to be detrained at Gosslershausen, but near General von Scholtz's position, somewhere east of Deutsch-Eylau. Any available troops from the garrisons of Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz and Marienburg, were to go to Strasburg and Lautenberg. These garrisons were composed only of Landwehr and Landsturm formations. Thus, in the south-west part of East Prussia a strong group was formed which could undertake an offensive, while the northern Group either continued its retreat in a south-westerly direction, or could be brought straight down south to assist in the action against the Narew Army. Of course an actual decision as to the plan to be adopted could only be given on the spot. The Russians should not be let off without another battle. No Staff Officer would miss such a chance of turning to good advantage the fact that their two armies were separated from each other.

I also reported to His Majesty the Emperor. His Majesty, who was very calm, spoke seriously of the Eastern situation, and deeply regretted that part of the German Fatherland should suffer invasion by the enemy. He was mindful of the sufferings of his people. The Kaiser decorated me with the order *Pour le Mérite*, which had been awarded me for my work at Liége, and spoke appreciatively of me. All my life this occasion will be a proud, if sad, memory.

At nine o'clock in the evening I left Coblenz in a special train for the Eastern Front.

Shortly before my departure I learnt that General von Hindenburg had accepted the post of Commander-in-Chief and would board the train at Hanover at four o'clock in the morning.

The General was on the station at Hanover and I reported to him. It was the first time we had met. All other versions belong to the realm of fiction.

I explained the situation shortly, and we then went to bed.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of the 23rd August, we arrived at Marienburg, where the Army Staff was expecting us. The situation had changed and the decision to retire behind the Vistula had been abandoned. It was intended to hold the line of the river Passarge. General Grünert, Deputy Chief of Staff of the 8th Army, and Lieut.-Colonel Hoffmann were responsible for this change of plan.

Our reception in Marienburg was anything but cheerful. It seemed like entering another world to come into this depressing atmosphere after Liége and the rapid advance in the West. But things soon changed, and the general atmosphere improved. Staff life was once more what I have already described.

II

Major Valdivia, the distinguished Spanish Military Attaché during the war, asked me on his first visit to Headquarters in Posen in October, 1914, whether the Battle of Tannenberg had been fought according to a long conceived and prepared plan. I could only answer that it had not. He was greatly surprised, for, like most other people, he had taken it for granted.

Strategic deployment can, and must be, planned far ahead. Battles in a war of positions demand similar treatment, but in the war of movement and the actions incidental to it the situations which the commander has to visualize follow one another in motley succession. He has to decide in accordance with his instinct. Thus soldiering becomes an art, and the soldier a strategist.

Gradually, during the period from 24th to 26th August, the battle plan took shape in all its details. The great question was whether it would really be possible to withdraw the 1st Reserve Corps and the 17th Army Corps from their positions facing Rennenkampf, so as to unite them with other units of the 8th Army, for a blow against the Narew Army. It depended solely on Rennenkampf himself, for if he knew how to make the

most of his success at Gumbinnen and advance quickly, my plan would be unthinkable. Then there would be no alternative but to withdraw the 1st R.C. and the 17th A.C. in a more south-westerly direction towards Wormditt, while the other part of the 8th Army held up the Narew Army and prepared to check it, if occasion served. The idea of a stiff defence of some line east of the Vistula, if necessary, also entered into our calculations.

We discovered by degrees that Rennenkampf was advancing only slowly. The two Army Corps could therefore be gradually deflected in their retirement through the Bartenstein-Gerdauen line, in a sharp southerly direction to Bischofsburg-Neidenburg.

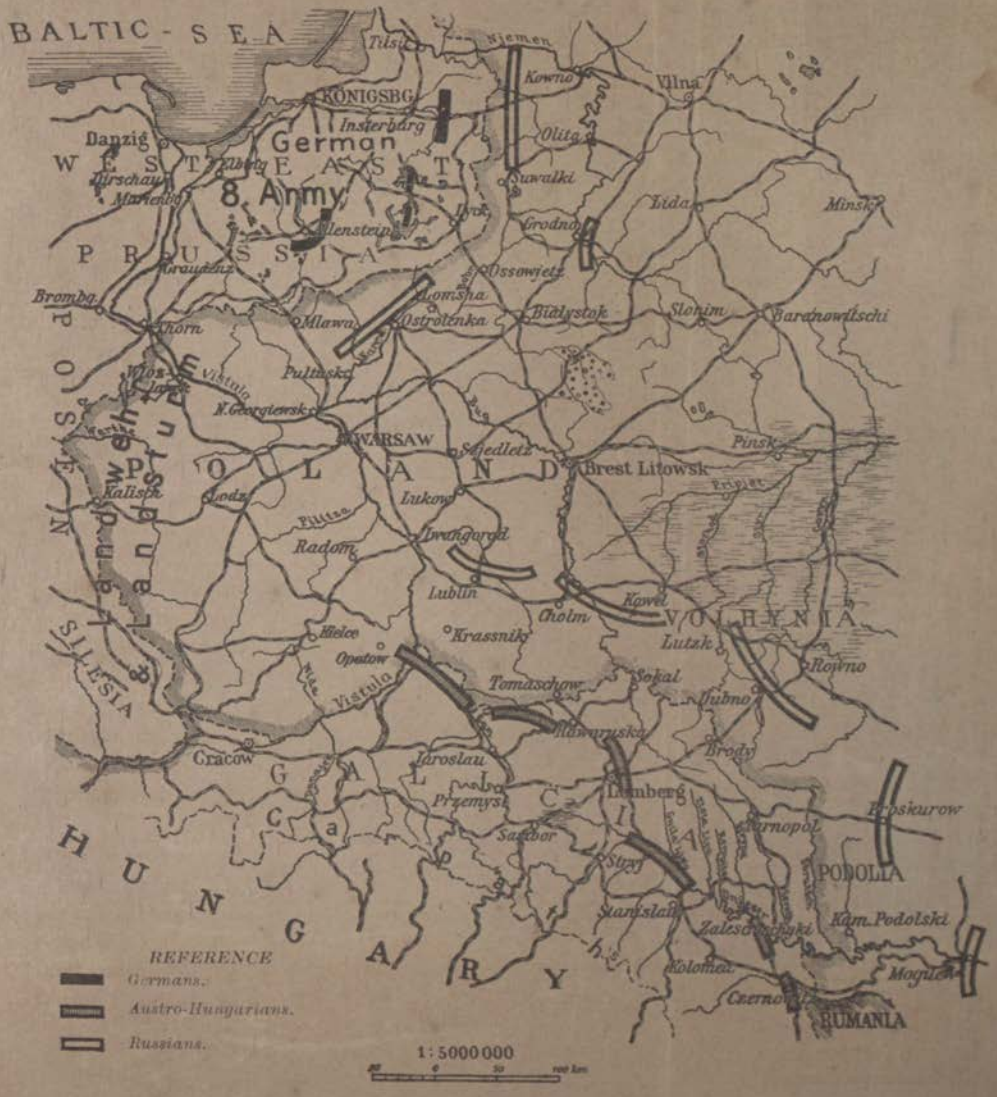
Next, the 17th A.C., protected by the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st R.C., was moved south via Schippenbeil to Bischofstein. As soon as it had passed behind the 1st R.C., and on the 26th advanced from Bischofstein to Bischofsburg, the 1st Army Corps itself moved, south of Schippenbeil, in the direction of Seeburg. Only the 1st Cav. Division remained facing Rennenkampf, near, and to the south of, Schippenbeil. Of this division, also on the 26th, the 1st Cavalry Brigade received the order to draw out via Rössel on Sensburg. Accordingly, from the 27th of August onwards, only two cavalry brigades stood between Lake Mauer and the river Pregel, facing twenty-four very strong infantry and several cavalry divisions of Rennenkampf's. The defensive chain of lakes was thus open on the west; and in any case it would have been quite easy to turn it and completely isolate Königsberg.

Our decision to give battle arose out of the slowness of the Russian command and was justified by the necessity of winning in spite of inferiority in numbers. It was none the less one of tremendous gravity.

On this line the two Corps were marching in the rear of the Narew Army from Neidenburg to Allenstein. In this way they exposed their rear without adequate protection to Rennenkampf's army, which was only two or three days' march away. When the battle began in real earnest on the 27th and, in contrast to previous wars, was not finished in one day but continued until

APPENDIX TO TANNENBERG

CONCENTRATION OF AUGUST 1914



the 30th, Rennenkampf's formidable host hung like a threatening thunder-cloud to the north-east. He need only have closed with us and we should have been beaten. But Rennenkampf brought his main body hardly beyond the Allenburg–Gerdauen–Neidenburg line, and we had time to win a brilliant victory.

Few knew the anxiety with which I watched the Niemen Army during those long days.

In order to allow the 17th A.C. and the 1st R.C. to make their full striking power felt, the other groups of the 8th Army had of course to attack. And whatever happened they had not to let themselves be beaten.

The reinforced 20th A.C. had passed through difficult and exhausting days. On the 23rd it stood, facing south, on the heights north-east of Gilgenburg, while the enemy was approaching from Neidenburg, that is from the south-east. The 3rd Reserve Division was still assembling west of Hohenstein. The 1st A.C. had just begun to detrain near Deutsch-Eylau. General von Scholtz was successful in beating off superior enemy forces, but whilst holding the heights east of Gilgenburg he was obliged to withdraw his left flank sharply west of Hohenstein, about as far as Mühlen. Although uncomfortable for the troops, this movement had its good points for the Russians thought they had won. They did not believe in any further German resistance, still less in a German attack. They saw the road open into German territory east of the Vistula.

On the 24th we got into touch with General von Scholtz and actually met him at Tannenberg. He and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Hell, were to distinguish themselves in the course of the war and leave their names to History.

General von Scholtz gave us a lucid account of the great achievements of the troops under his command since the beginning of the campaign and the great difficulties encountered in the last battles. He was of opinion that the enemy would attack him again, but that he would be able to stand fast.

On the journey from Marienburg to Tannenberg, an intercepted enemy wireless message was given us which gave a clear idea of our opponents' dispositions for the next few days. The Narew

Army was advancing, its left wing in *échelon*, its 6th Corps directed via Ortelsburg on Bischofsburg, which was reached or passed by the 26th, and its 13th Corps directed from Neidenburg through Passenheim on Allenstein. The 15th and 18th Corps, with which General von Scholtz had been engaged during these days, was following. On the 26th, the most southerly *échelon* was to be found somewhere near Waplitz. Still further back to the left, and pushing west, the 1st Corps, covered by several cavalry divisions, was moving through Mlawa and Soldau, against Lautenberg and Strasburg.

It was a question of breaking up this movement of the enemy by an attack from the west with the southern group of the 8th Army. It was a great temptation to attack simultaneously south of Soldau, in order to surround the 1st Russian Corps as well. The defeat of the Narew Army, in conjunction with the advance of the 17th A.C. and the 1st R.C., could thus have been absolutely annihilating, but the forces at my disposal were insufficient. So I proposed to General von Hindenburg that an attack be made in the direction of Usdau by the 1st A.C. on the line Deutsch-Eylau-Montowo, and by the right wing of the reinforced 20th A.C. from the direction of Gilgenburg, so as to throw back the Russian 1st Corps to the south, beyond Soldau. Then, our 1st A.C. was to break through in the direction of Neidenburg, in conjunction with the 1st and 17th A.C. and 1st R.C., in order to surround at least the main body of the Narew Army. We had to confine ourselves to this plan, if we wished to succeed.

The attack by the 1st and 20th A.C. had to be postponed to the 27th, though I should have been glad to see it begin earlier; but the 1st A.C. was not yet ready, the condition of the railways in East Prussia being far from good. General von François, commanding the 1st A.C., quite rightly insisted on concentrating the whole of his Corps before attacking.

But matters did not develop as smoothly as would appear from this short sketch. All the troops were exceedingly exhausted, and strengths had been reduced by continual fighting. Many difficulties were met with in the transmission of orders to the 1st R.C. and the 17th A.C. Enemy cavalry patrols rendered that

zone unsafe. It was doubtful whether the enemy would give us time to carry out our plans.

But the greatest difficulties were due to the refugees, numbering many thousands, some on foot and some in vehicles, who blocked the roads behind von Scholtz's group. They hung on to the troops, and a sudden retreat on the part of this Army Group would have had the most distressing consequences, both for refugees and soldiers. But it could not be avoided, for the few gendarmes were not sufficient to take charge of such masses. We could do nothing for them. The memory of the many sad sights I then saw haunts me still.

III

On the 24th and 25th of August, our Headquarters were at Rosenberg and on the 26th at Löbau. We took advantage of these last two days to get into touch with commanders and troops in various parts.

On the evening of the 26th the positions of both sides were somewhat as follows:

General von Mühlmann—who had the 1st A.C. under his orders—was in Lautenburg and Strasburg, with portions of the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses, in close touch with enemy cavalry. The 1st A.C. itself had been concentrated to the south of Montowo, and had fought its way as far as Usdau, which was strongly held by the Russian 1st Corps. General von François was ready to continue his advance on the 27th.

To the right wing of the reinforced 20th A.C. had been allotted the task of attacking Usdau from the north and then joining hands with the 1st Army Corps in its later advance upon Neidenburg. The 41st Infantry Division was to march upon Waplitz from Gross Gardienen, while on their left a Landwehr Brigade, the 3rd Reserve Division and the 37th Infantry Division were simultaneously to attack Waplitz and Hohenstein on a line running north from Mühlen. The enemy had pushed forward on the whole front and occupied Allenstein.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, which had been placed at our disposal by our General Headquarters, was coming up near Osterode and Biessellen. This division came from Schleswig-Holstein, where up to now it had been employed in guarding the canal and the coast. It was to take Hohenstein from the north-west.

The 1st Reserve Corps reached the neighbourhood of Seeburg on the 26th. The 17th A.C. had been engaged with a division of the Russian 6th Corps between Lautern and Gr. Bössau, north of Bischofsburg and had driven it back in the direction of Bischofsburg. The 6th Landwehr Brigade, which had advanced on the 24th and 25th from Lötzen to the north-west of Bischofsburg, had taken a successful part in the action.

The attack on Usdau was to begin at 4 a.m. on the 27th. We wanted to be present at this decisive point, in order to be able to superintend on the spot the co-operation of the 1st and 20th A.C., orders for which had already been given. Just as we left Löbau for Gilgenburg the joyous news reached us that Usdau had fallen. I considered the battle won. However, we had not got that far yet. Soon after, it transpired that Usdau had not yet been taken, and it only fell late in the afternoon. From a tactical point of view the Narew Army was now broken through. The 1st A.C. threw the enemy back beyond Soldau and marched upon Neidenburg.

The 20th A.C., greatly exhausted as it was, was not so successful, and the 41st Infantry Division, near Gr. Gardienen, made no progress. Nor was any ground won further north.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division closed in on Hohenstein.

We returned to Löbau in the afternoon, not altogether satisfied.

On our arrival, news came through that the 1st A.C. had been routed and that the relics of this corps were arriving in Montowo. Such news was difficult to believe. A telephone inquiry to the Railway Commandant there elucidated the fact that troops of the 1st Army Corps were collecting at that point, but later on it appeared that it was a question of only one battalion that had found itself in a very tight corner and given way. Another

rather alarming discovery was a number of supply columns hurriedly retreating through Löbau.

A general has much to bear and needs strong nerves. The civilian is too inclined to think that war is only like the working out of an arithmetical problem with given numbers. It is anything but that. On both sides it is a case of wrestling with powerful, unknown physical and psychological forces, a struggle which inferiority in numbers makes all the more difficult. It means working with men of varying force of character and with their own views. The only quantity that is known and constant is the will of the leader.

All those who criticize the dispositions of a general ought first to study military history, unless they have themselves taken part in a war in a position of command. I should like to see such people compelled to conduct a battle themselves. They would be overwhelmed by the greatness of their task, and when they realized the obscurity of the position, and the exacting nature of the enormous demands made on them, they would doubtless be more modest. Only the Head of the Government, the Statesman who has decided for war, and that with a clear conscience, shoulders the same or a bigger burden of responsibility than that of the Commander-in-Chief. In his case it is a question of one great decision only, but the Commander of an army is faced with decisions daily and hourly. He is continuously responsible for the welfare of many hundred-thousands of persons, even of nations. For a soldier there is nothing greater, but at the same time more overwhelming, than to find himself at the head of an army or the entire field army of his country.

Late at night we received news in Löbau that the 1st R.C. had reached Wartenburg. The Russian 6th Corps was in full retreat before the 17th Army Corps beyond Ortelsburg and was again defeated south of Bischofsburg. Smaller forces were sent in pursuit, while the main body of the 17th A.C. bivouacked at and to the north of Mensguth, on the evening of the 27th.

Nothing remained to be done on the 28th but to give orders for the 1st A.C. to occupy Neidenburg. In the meantime, the Corps had already made a turning movement in that direction.

The 20th Army Corps was to carry out the attack which had been fixed for the 27th, and more especially to push forward the 41st Infantry Division. Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division was to

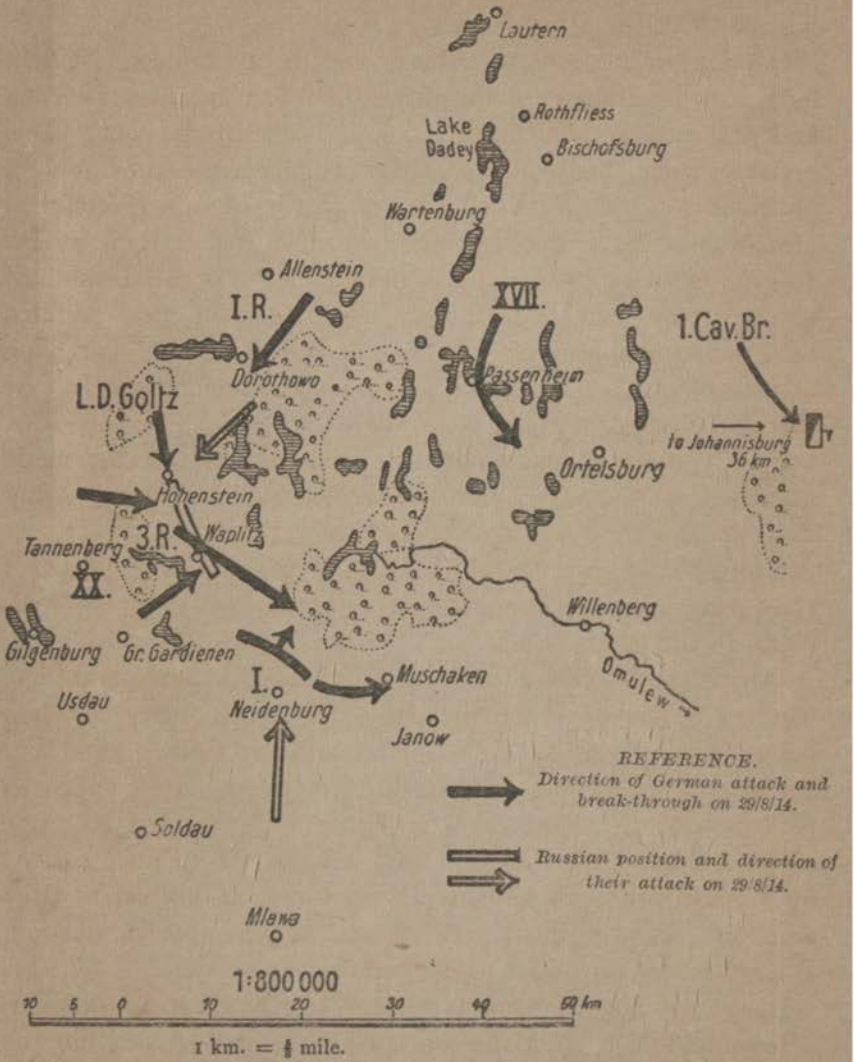


Fig. 3. Tannenberg. Position on August 29th, 1914.

attack Hohenstein. The 1st R.C. and the 17th A.C. were moved up west, covered against attack from Ortelsburg, to positions on a line running from Allenstein to Passenheim.

Early on the 28th, we went to Frögenau and took up station in the open at the eastern end of the village. General von Scholtz was not far off. A very ineffective field-telephone connected us with the 1st A.C., but no communication at all was possible with the other forces.

Our first impressions were by no means favourable. Neidenburg had certainly been taken, but the 41st Infantry Division had attacked Waplitz in a fog and been driven back. This division, which had suffered heavy casualties, was now holding positions west of Waplitz and anticipating a hostile counter-attack with the greatest anxiety. I sent an officer there by car to give me a report on the condition of the division, and his account was not encouraging. The Landwehr near Mühlen were not making progress. If the enemy attacked the right wing of the 20th A.C. in great force, a grave crisis might result. At the best, the battle would be prolonged.

Finally, Rennenkampf might march. But the enemy made no attack on the 41st Infantry Division and the Niemen Army did not march.

Captain Bartenwerffer, of the Staff of the 17th A.C., flew over the enemy lines, and brought good reports of the progress of his Corps in the enemy's rear.

During the afternoon the situation changed to our advantage. The 3rd Reserve Division, and later the 37th Infantry Division, gained ground west of Hohenstein; von der Goltz's Landwehr Division entered Hohenstein itself. The enemy front appeared to be wavering. General von Hindenburg wanted to drive on to Mühlen. We ran right into a temporary panic, created by Russian prisoners who were being taken to the rear in large numbers. This incident created an unfavourable impression, as the disorder spread far to the rear.

In the evening we went to Osterode. Owing to an unfortunate mobilization order the civil authorities had already left the town. This must have considerably increased the anxiety of the civil population.

We were not at all clear as to how things stood with the individual units; but there was no doubt that the battle was won.

Whether it would prove a real Cannae was still uncertain. The 1st A.C. had to send a detachment to Willenberg, whither the 17th A.C. was also to proceed. The retreat of the Russians was to be cut off.

During the night we learnt further details. The Russian 13th Corps had advanced from Allenstein on Hohenstein, and had pressed the Landwehr severely. The 1st R.C. had come down south-west of Allenstein—its further advance would close the ring round the Russian 13th Corps and thus conclude the whole operation, whilst the 1st and 17th A.C.'s cut off the retreat of the other portions.

On the morning of the 29th I decided to go to Hohenstein to try and disentangle the congestion caused by the troops getting mixed up. Operations against Rennenkampf's army were to be initiated, whether he advanced or remained where he was.

Still another incident occurred before we were certain of victory.

Early on the 29th, we received a message by aeroplane that a hostile Army Corps was marching on Neidenburg from the south, and was nearing the town. It was therefore threatening the rear of the 1st A.C., which, with its front facing north, was engaging Russian troops in retreat. At the same moment we were called up from Neidenburg and informed that hostile shrapnel was falling on the town. Then we were cut off. All available troops were set marching in the direction of Neidenburg, to support the 1st A.C. in the engagement we anticipated. But General von François had saved himself already by his own energy, and the enemy displayed more hesitation than the situation justified.

After giving these orders, I set out for Hohenstein, and on the way went over the battlefield, which made a deep impression on me. East of Hohenstein our own columns were getting entangled with masses of Russian prisoners. It was no easy task to restore order. The 1st R.C. and the 20th A.C. were drawn up along the road from Allenstein to Hohenstein and the Army Command had thus again at least two corps at its disposal.

The battle was drawing to a conclusion. The 3rd Reserve

MAP I

TANNENBERG, 1914

Division had broken through the enemy lines and reached Muschaken, east of Neidenburg. The Russians, retiring through the thick woods, tried to break through the German ring at several points. At Muschaken, in particular, very heavy fighting took place on the 30th, but without in any way influencing the issue of the battle.

General Samsonoff shot himself and was buried near Willenberg without being recognized. His widow, who was in Germany in connection with matters concerning prisoners of war, was able to trace his grave by a locket which had been taken for identification purposes from the body of the fallen general when he was buried.

The Russian Generals who were taken prisoner arrived at Osterrode and reported to General von Hindenburg.

The number of prisoners taken and the amount of booty captured are already well known.

The enemy losses in killed and wounded, too, were extremely heavy. The widely-circulated report that thousands of Russians were driven into the marshes and there perished is a myth; no marsh was to be found anywhere near.

One of the most brilliant battles in the history of the world had been fought. It had been the achievement of troops which had been fighting for weeks, sometimes unsuccessfully. To the training of our army in peace time, alone, did we owe this feat. The battle was a glorious triumph for the generals and their troops, indeed, for every officer and man, and the whole country.

Germany and Austria-Hungary rejoiced. The world was silent.

At my suggestion, the battle was named the Battle of Tannenberg, in memory of that other battle long ago in which the Teutonic Knights succumbed to united Lithuanian and Polish hosts. Will any German now, as then, suffer the Lett, and more especially the Pole, to take advantage of our misfortune to do us violence? Are centuries of old German culture to be lost?

I could not rejoice wholeheartedly at our mighty victory, for the strain imposed on my nerves by the uncertainty about Rennenkampf's army had been too great. All the same, we were proud of this battle. The victory had been brought about by a

break-through, an encircling movement, firm resolution to win and intelligent limitation of aims. Despite our inferiority on the Eastern Front, we had succeeded in assembling on the battlefield a force nearly as strong as that of the foe. I thought of General Count von Schlieffen and thanked him for his teaching.

In the Protestant Church at Allenstein General von Hindenburg and I rendered thanks to Almighty God for this victory.

I had not a moment to spare for relaxation. I had to work out the re-grouping of the Army for further operations. It was an uncommonly difficult task simultaneously to finish one battle and make plans for the next. Innumerable other matters had to be attended to between whiles. One urgent matter was the removal of the prisoners. Having regard to the uncertainty of the situation their number was a heavy burden in itself.

I was decorated with the Iron Cross, 2nd Class, of which I was exceedingly proud. Even now, when I think of Liége and Tannenberg, my heart swells with pardonable satisfaction. The value of the Iron Cross, 2nd Class, dwindled in the course of the war. That is quite natural, although regrettable. But the Order should be worn with pride by anyone who has honourably won it.

IV

On the Western Front the victorious progress of the German arms was still unchecked. Accordingly, General Headquarters considered that they could reinforce the 8th Army with three Army Corps from the West. The telegram announcing the proposed reinforcements arrived just at the commencement of the battle of Tannenberg. Later, I was asked whether one Army Corps could be retained in the West, and as I had not asked for reinforcements, I assented. So only two Army Corps arrived, the Guard Reserve Corps, the 11th Corps and the 8th Cavalry Division.

The decision to weaken the forces on the Western Front was premature, but of course, we in the East could not know that, for the reports from the West were favourable. But it was par-

ticularly fateful that the reinforcements destined for the Eastern Front were drawn from the right wing, which was fighting for a decision, instead of from the left wing which was stronger than was necessary after the battle in Lorraine had been fought. The corps which was to have been the third for the Eastern Front was left in Lorraine.

The situation in Galicia had already become threatening. The Russian main forces had hurled themselves on the Austro-Hungarian armies and beaten them east of Lemberg at the end of August.

The Austrian Army was not, at the beginning of the war, a first-class fighting instrument. Had we really entertained aggressive intentions before the war, we should have insisted on Austria-Hungary's improving her armaments. Her railway communications, which were totally inadequate, would also have been extended. Our neglect in that respect was, in any case, a great mistake. The Triple Alliance was only a political union, while the Franco-Russian alliance was of a definitely military character, and this constituted a great advantage to our enemies.

Even our arrangements with Austria-Hungary in the event of a joint war were of the poorest. General Count von Schlieffen always feared a breach of faith, which indeed actually occurred. A scheme of mutual operations existed only in the roughest outlines. The deployment of the Austro-Hungarian armies on the further side of the river San was justified only if they felt themselves superior to the Russian Army without outside help, as many Austro-Hungarian officers believed, or if we could cross the river Narew simultaneously with strong forces. But this we were not in a position to do, as the last Army Bill had not granted us the three extra Army Corps for which the General Staff had hoped. Further, we now had also to make up on the Western front for Italy's defection.

According to former military agreements with Italy, three Italian Corps and two Cavalry Divisions were to deploy in Alsace, whilst the main body of the army, minus the coast-defence forces, were to be assembled on the Franco-Italian frontier. Simultaneously, the Fleet was to endeavour to cut France

off from her colonies in North Africa. These arrangements were in force for some time—but subsequently lapsed. Then at the express wish of General Pollio, Chief of the Italian General Staff, these plans were once more worked at.

General Pollio died in the summer of 1914—shortly before the outbreak of war. There was not the least necessity for France to leave even a single soldier on her south-east frontier; she could employ every soldier against us, for she knew perfectly well that Italy would not come into the war on our side. Our former ally thus did us untold harm. Her attitude towards England was not to be misunderstood. Animosity certainly existed between Italy and Austria-Hungary, but although this was of long standing, it did not prevent Italy entering into an alliance with us and Austria-Hungary. This alliance brought Italy many advantages and we naturally expected that she would feel under an obligation to us.

A healthy national egoism is easy to understand, and exists in every nation. But there are certain ethical laws which must not be violated, and that is precisely what Italy did. So she cannot complain of the adverse criticism we levelled at her during the four years of war.

The critical position of the Austro-Hungarian Army at the end of August, opposed by greatly superior Russian forces, was not to be misunderstood. General von Conrad, Chief of the Austrian General Staff, insisted, quite properly, from his point of view, that we should cross the river Narew. But seeing that the 8th Army was still inferior in numbers to that of General Rennenkampf, it was impossible to accede to this request. An advance in the direction of Mlawa-Pultusk could at any time be stopped by the advance of General Rennenkampf towards the Allenstein-Elbing line. There was, therefore, no alternative but to deal first with the Russian Niemen Army.

Still under the influence of the Battle of Tannenberg, Rennenkampf had apparently withdrawn his advanced units several kilometres, but he seemed to intend a stand between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer. The 8th Army was compelled to fight a second battle, and had to use all its available strength

In the execution of this plan, the reinforcements from the West were detrained on the Allenstein-Elbing line, and the 8th Army was concentrated ready to advance between the Willen berg and Allenstein front.

Only small forces were left behind for the defence of the frontier near Soldau. They were to advance into Poland in the direction of Mlawa.

As soon as the troops had been deployed, we intended to attack Rennenkampf on a wide front between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer, while enveloping his left wing beyond Lötzen and further south. The task delegated to our outermost southern wing was to guard the Army from attack from Augustovo and Osowiec, where we expected hostile forces to detrain. The concentrated 8th Army was to fight in three groups, from the river Pregel to Lake Mauer, east of Lötzen and in the direction of Lyck.

At the beginning of September the following units were ready to advance :

The garrisons of the Vistula fortresses, near Soldau,

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, near Neidenburg,

3rd Res. Div. and 1st A.C., near Willenberg, Ortelsburg, 1st Cavalry Brigade west of Johannisburg,

17th A.C., Passenheim,

20th, 11th A.C., and 1st R.C. in and on both sides of Allenstein,

Guard R.C. coming up from Elbing towards the lower course of the river Passarge,

8th Cav. Div. advancing in the direction of Lötzen,

The 1st Cav. Div., minus one Cavalry Brigade, was still occupying its positions facing the Niemen Army. It was also to advance via Lötzen,

The main Königsberg Reserve holding the line of the Deime,

The main Posen Reserve and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division were being brought up, but did not arrive in time for the battle.

The supply columns and trains of the 1st R.C. and the 27th A.C., which were behind the river Passarge when the forward movement started, had to carry out some difficult movements, but finally succeeded in reaching their concentration area without too much friction.

Some Russian Cavalry, before which our 1st Cavalry Division had to give way, had temporarily penetrated west even as far as the Passarge below Wormditt, without doing any military damage, however. Strange to say, they had not even destroyed the main railway line from Elbing to Königsberg.

It was naturally of the utmost importance to us to get our railways into working order again, especially those we had had to destroy ourselves during our retreat from Gumbinnen. This was particularly essential in regard to the station of Korschen. This station ought to have been thoroughly demolished; but within forty-eight hours of our recovering possession it could be utilized again. It was lucky for us that the work of destruction had not been carried out as thoroughly as I had expected. The troops as yet were not sufficiently experienced. It was plain that special technical instruction was needed. I made a mental note of this for future occasions.

V

The advance against Rennenkampf's Army began on the 4th of September. On the 7th the Guard R.C., the 1st R.C., the 11th and 20th A.C. entrenched a position in front of the enemy lines at Wehlau-Gerdauen-Nordenburg-Angerburg, between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer, and attacked during the following days according to plan. The engagements, particularly those of the 20th Army Corps, did not go well for us. The Russians made a powerful counter-attack. The enemy positions were strong and cleverly constructed, and we should never have got the upper hand of them with the arms and ammunition at our disposal, had it not been that the projected enveloping movement near Lötzen and the fortified chain of lakes was beginning to have its effect.

Even east of Lötzen, which had held out bravely against enemy attacks all this time, things did not look promising. The 17th A.C. and the 1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions, which had advanced from the fortress, only made slow progress north-east of the lakes, on the 8th and 9th of September. They had some very hard fighting round Kruglauken and Possessern. The 1st A.C., which had pressed forward from Nikolaiken and Johannisburg, had to be deflected sharply north from the east side of the lake line. By this movement it secured more room for the 17th A.C. by the evening of the 9th. The 3rd Res. Div., with Von der Goltz's Landwehr Div. behind it, was still advancing in the Bialla-Lyck direction. On September 3rd it had already encountered the enemy in very superior force near Bialla.

This operation also was extraordinarily daring. To begin with, the Russian Niemen Army, with its twenty-four infantry divisions, was very much stronger than the 8th Army, with its fifteen to sixteen divisions. Moreover, the Russian divisions consisted of sixteen battalions, and ours, at that time, of twelve. The Russian fighting strength was further increased by from four to six divisions, which were being assembled round Osowiec and Augustovo. This immense superiority could be concentrated against us at any moment and at any chosen point. Our right wing, in particular, was in danger to the east of the lakes. It might be overwhelmed. Even in such a situation as this, we did not hesitate for a moment to venture on a battle. Our superior training was in our favour. Tannenberg had given us a great advantage.

The Army Command would have liked the right wing to have been stronger, and a division of the 20th A.C., west of the lakes, had been kept ready to be placed at our disposal. But this division had to be returned to the Corps. The front of fifty kilometres, on which the four corps attacked the enemy, was certainly very long. Further, the staff of the Guard Reserve Corps, fearing a Russian attack, had therefore concentrated its units. The north wing had to stand firm on the Pregel, otherwise the 8th Army might be outflanked there. The attack of the enveloping wing must not be stronger than we had allowed for. We

had to wait and see whether our main attack would succeed or fail. Hard fighting would be the decisive factor here, We could only do everything in our power to secure the success at which we aimed.

On the morning of September 10th we received the decisive news that during the night the enemy had evacuated his position facing the 1st R.C. north of Gerdauen—probably in consequence of the continuous attacks of the 1st and 27th A.C. It was said that the corps had occupied their position, and intended to march on. The rejoicing at Headquarters can be imagined. A great success had once more been achieved, but still nothing decisive. The Russian Army was not yet beaten by any means. North-east of Lötzen we had only had local successes. It was important to carry out a frontal attack with all our strength, and throw ourselves on the receding enemy whilst the enveloping wing advanced east of Rominten Woods towards the Wirballen–Kovno road. In this way we intended to drive the Russians as far as possible towards the Niemen.

It had also to be taken into account that Rennenkampf, who was now co-operating with the reinforcements arriving further south, would be able to make a vigorous attack in any direction. Our lines were very thin everywhere, though the two northern groups, which had hitherto been separated by Lake Mauer, had joined up again. The situation was still extremely critical, and the tension was great.

The troops had a fresh task before them. Keeping in close touch with each other, they had to pursue the enemy unceasingly by forced marches, and attack him whenever he made a stand. At the same time they had to wait for the co-operation of neighbouring columns before making local enveloping movements, so as to minimize losses. The 17th A.C., and more particularly the 1st A.C. on the extreme right, and the 1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions had to strike again and again. The marching orders for the different sections, beginning at the left, were roughly as follows :

Königsberg Main Reserve : Königsberg—Tilsit.

1st R.C.: Gross-Audowöhnen.

11th A.C.: North of Darkehmen, Gumbinnen—Stallupönen.

20th A.C.: Darkehmen, half-way to Wirballen—Lake Wyschtyt.

17th A.C.: Due north of Rominten Woods towards Wyschtynice.

1st A.C.: Due south-east of Rominten Woods towards Mariampol.

8th and 1st Cavalry Divisions: In advance of the 1st A.C. towards the Wirballen–Kovno road.

These movements did not turn out quite as I had hoped. Friend and foe were difficult to distinguish. Our own columns occasionally fired on one another. The troops made too vigorous frontal attacks, and did not await the co-operation of neighbouring columns. But the most serious difficulty was caused by the fact that on September 11th the 11th A.C. thought it was being attacked by a very superior force. This was quite conceivable and had to be taken into account. Under the existing conditions as regards the strength of the two forces, the front line required the close tactical support of the enveloping Corps. We had therefore to decide to bring the 17th and 1st A.C. further north than was originally intended. After a few hours the belief of the 11th Army Corps proved to be unfounded. But the order had already been given to the enveloping wing. Later, the Corps were again diverted to their original route, but by then at least half a day had been lost.

The 8th Army did magnificent work. The whole advance, which covered well over one hundred kilometres in four days, was a brilliant victorious march for these troops, exhausted as they were by continuous fighting and strain of every kind. This applied more particularly to the original units of the 8th Army; the Guard R.C. and the 11th A.C. had fought valiantly in the West at Namur, but they had certainly had an easier time hitherto.

The results of the battle were not so obvious as those of Tannenberg. There were no operations in the enemy's rear, for they were not possible. The enemy did not make a stand, but withdrew, so that they could only be forced back still further

by frontal and flanking attacks. Whilst at Tannenberg we took over 90,000 prisoners, we could now only count 45,000. But whatever could have been done under the circumstances had been accomplished.

As a matter of fact, Rennenkampf does not seem to have ever intended a serious stand. At any rate, he began his retreat very early in the operations and marched at night. Our airmen did certainly note the course of some retreating columns, but their reports were too vague. The Russian knew how to conduct retreats and move masses of troops without using the roads.

Our continuous movements, combined with the ever-present menace of envelopment, drove the retreating Russian Army before us so quickly that they crossed the Niemen in a state of dissolution. For the next few weeks they need not be regarded as first-class fighting material, unless the Russians should reinforce them with fresh troops.

The battle of the Masurian Lakes has not received the recognition it deserves. It was a decisive engagement, ambitiously planned and carefully executed against an extraordinary numerical superiority. It was attended with grave risks, but the enemy did not realize his strength. He did not even attempt to fight it out, but withdrew so very hastily that, under our pressure, the retreat assumed the character of flight.

Away from the main battle-field the 3rd Reserve Division, under their energetic leader, General von Morgen, and von der Goltz's Landwehr Division had fought a very successful action against a superior enemy force near Bialla on September 8th, and then beaten the reinforcements which were brought up. In so doing they had removed a grave source of danger to the army fighting further north. General von der Goltz was held up outside Osowiec. General von Morgen took Augustovo and Suwalki after heavy fighting. The intention of the Grand Duke Nicholas to relieve the pressure on Rennenkampf from that quarter was frustrated.

On September 13th the battle was practically over.

On that day the situation was roughly as follows:

Fortress garrisons under General von Mühlmann at Mlawa.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division before Osowiec.

3rd Reserve Division at Augustovo–Suwalki.

1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions and 1st A.C.: Far ahead towards Mariampol.

17th A.C. and 20th A.C.: Beyond the Wyschtynice–Wirballen line.

21st A.C.: To the north of Wirballen.

1st R.C.: Vladislavoff.

Guard R.C.: Already withdrawn north-east of Wehlau.

Königsberg Main Reserve: Tilsit.

Thus in the centre of the field of battle several Corps had closed in on each other. In a sense, there was no room for some of them, and these would be the first available for further operations. At the very beginning of the advance against Rennenkampf, there could be no doubt whatever that under no circumstances would it be continued beyond the Niemen.

After settling with Rennenkampf I had thoughts of proceeding with all our available forces over the southern frontier against the line of the Narew (our flanks being protected by the east frontier of East Prussia), so as to co-operate more effectively with the Austrian Army, in accordance with General von Conrad's plan. I had not yet been informed of the heavy reverses which had been sustained by the Austrian Army. Orders were issued in conformity with this intention, but it was already too late to put it into execution.

VI

During the whole of the victorious advance of the 8th Army from the neighbourhood of Allenstein into enemy territory, the Army Headquarters Staff had followed close behind the troops. I have always insisted that we should be in the closest possible touch with both commanders and men. It was particularly necessary for the purposes of giving orders and receiving reports, as technical means of communication were still defective.

Telephone facilities in the province of East Prussia were very

meagre. Some of the officials had forsaken their posts. The wireless apparatus rendered good service, but only the cavalry and the Army Headquarters Staff possessed it. So I was obliged to rely mainly on motor-cars, and my practice of sending out Staff Officers.

The gentlemen of the Volunteer Motor Corps did magnificent work as dispatch-riders. They accomplished journeys which recalled the most daring patrol work. I needed the few airmen urgently for reconnoitring, and could not spare them for dispatch bearing. But in spite of the scanty means of communication, we always succeeded in being well informed and getting our orders through in good time. I used the telephone a good deal also, giving encouragement where it seemed advisable, and blaming in no measured terms where the success of the whole operation required it. This personal intercourse with the Chiefs of Staff was useful, as it afforded opportunities for personal contact and co-operation.

We had quite a series of Headquarters. Nordenburg was the first place we came to which had been in the hands of the Russians for a considerable time. The dirt there was incredible. The market was full of filth. The rooms were disgustingly unclean.

At Insterburg we stayed at the Dessauer Hotel, in the same quarters which Rennenkampf had left. The Grand Duke Nicholas is also said to have left the town at the last moment.

We had an opportunity of inspecting the Russian positions more closely, and were all deeply thankful that we had not been obliged to storm them. We should have paid a heavy price in blood.

Many of the Russian troops behaved in an exemplary manner in East Prussia in August and September. Wine cellars and provision stores were guarded, and Rennenkampf kept strict discipline at Insterburg. But the war brought with it endless hardships and terrors. The Cossacks were rough and cruel. They burned and plundered. Many inhabitants were killed, women were outraged, and civilians sometimes carried off. These actions were for the most part quite senseless, and one

sought in vain for any reason for them. The people had not offered the slightest opposition to the Russians; they were docile and had not taken part in the fighting, in accordance with our wishes. The Russians alone must bear the responsibility for their misdeeds.

The Russian Army had been a heavy burden on East Prussia. Now we proudly felt that we had rescued German soil from the enemy. The joy and gratitude of the people were very great.

This province was not rescued only to come under a foreign yoke. Heaven preserve us from such a humiliation!

On the 14th of September we were at Insterburg, enjoying to the full our satisfaction over our victory and splendid achievements. All the greater was my surprise at my appointment as Chief of Staff of the Southern Army, which was being formed under General von Schubert at Breslau.

VII

In the West the German advance had ended in a reverse.

The right wing of the German force in the West was too weak and did not extend far enough; the withdrawal of the Guard R.C. and the 11th A.C. had made itself felt with fatal results. This wing should, of course, have been strengthened by Corps drawn from Lorraine and Alsace. That was enjoined in General Count von Schlieffen's plan. Further, it was quite contrary to his plan to let the German forces there advance so far forward against the Lunéville–Epinal line and be completely held up. That would have been the fate of the entire army if, instead of advancing through Belgium, we had kept our right wing south of Longwy. Whilst we were bleeding to death before the fortresses on the Verdun–Belfort line, our right wing would have been attacked from Belgium and beaten by the combined Belgian, French and English armies. At the same time we should have lost our industrial region on the Lower Rhine. Our ultimate defeat would have been certain.

The order to retreat from the Marne was issued, whether on good grounds or not I have never been able to decide.

It was obvious that the war would now be a long one and require enormous sacrifices of the Fatherland. The hour had come when everything, literally everything, would have to be staked on the war, and the work of enlightening our people would have to be undertaken on a large scale. I was astonished at the optimism I found prevailing in Berlin towards the end of October, 1914. There seemed to be no realization of the tremendous gravity of our situation.

It was nothing less than a fatality, in view of the numerical inferiority of the Dual Alliance and the fact that Germany was surrounded by enemies, that she did not win the war, which had been forced on her, by some overwhelming lightning stroke, and so lay low an enemy superior in numbers but inferior in training. We now had to face the prospect that, in the course of the war, the training of the armies would become equalized to a certain extent, although it was reasonable to hope that the German Army would long maintain some advantage over the others in virtue of its great traditions. The heavy losses in officers might be a serious matter. At all events, it was essential that we should do all in our power to maintain our superiority in training, so that the enemy's superiority in men might not be felt so much.

In particular, we had to face the prospect that England would make use of the time to increase her armaments and raise a powerful army in addition to her fleet. She had quite enough men.

In view of this we could not neglect any means that might still enable us to win the war. Germany had to become an armed camp. That was the burden of the New Year's message I sent to a newspaper on January 1st, 1915.

In the autumn of 1914 and the winter of 1914–15 General Headquarters had raised from eighteen to twenty new divisions. We formed new divisions out of the Landwehr and Landsturm formations. We began by reducing the number of battalions in a division from twelve to nine, and forming fresh divisions out

of the battalions thus liberated, allotting to each its complement of artillery and special arms. We did a great deal, though in many directions we did not do enough.

The 8th Army at this time could quite easily have sent some corps to the Western Front. I do not know whether the idea was ever considered by General Headquarters, or whether the situation of the Austro-Hungarian Army made it out of the question. The latter, as I now realized, was unfortunately retreating, completely defeated, across the San with terrible losses. The Russians were following it up. A Russian invasion of Moravia and then Upper Silesia seemed possible. The Austro-Hungarian Army would have to be supported if it were not to be annihilated. An advance of the 8th Army across the Narew, the operation which had been planned at the beginning of September, would now have been useless. Help must be sent immediately and could not be too powerful. We were not able to reinforce the Western Front.

In the instructions which I received at Insterburg on the evening of the 14th it was stated that two corps of the 8th Army were to form the Southern Army in Upper Silesia. This looked like nothing more than a defensive measure; at any rate, it would be quite inadequate to restore the situation in Galicia. We had not merely to hold the enemy in check; we had to act.

Accordingly, in a conversation over the telephone, I suggested, both to General Headquarters and General von Moltke himself, that the whole of the 8th Army should be sent to Upper Silesia and Posen under General von Hindenburg, who had just been put in command. In spite of the danger that Russia would bring up fresh forces in a further attempt to invade the unfortunate province of East Prussia, only weak forces should be left for its protection. I certainly hoped that such an invasion was a long way off. Even during the operations arrangements had been made to strengthen and extend the defences of Lötzen and the Lakes. We not only insisted that a scheme should be drawn up, but that the work should be put in hand at once. The Angerapp line was also to be fortified. These measures

were the effect of the altered situation, and subsequently proved to have been thoroughly justified.

General von Moltke promised that my suggestion should be considered, and gave me a short account of the sudden change in the situation on the Western Front. Up to that time we had only heard rumours of it. General von Moltke was deeply moved by the state of affairs in the West.

That was my last official conversation with this remarkable man. He had a keen grip of military affairs, and could handle big situations with extraordinary mastery. But his temperament was not really resolute and his inclinations were more pacific than warlike. I can recall many of my interviews with him. At the beginning of the war his health had been seriously affected by two cures at Carlsbad, which he underwent within a period of a few months.

At this time the War Minister, General von Falkenhayn, began to direct operations.

On the evening of September 14th I took leave of General von Hindenburg and of my comrades. I did not find it easy to leave the Commander in Chief and the Staff after two victorious battles. General von Hindenburg had always agreed to my suggestions, and gladly accepted the responsibility of consenting to them. A fine sense of confidence had grown up between us, the confidence of men who think alike. Among the Staff there was complete unanimity of view in all military matters.

I left Insterburg on the morning of September 15th, travelling by car through Graudenz and Thorn to Breslau, my destination. I knew absolutely nothing about my new sphere of action. It seemed to me more limited than my previous one, but I soon found that I had a great and important field for my activities.

THE CAMPAIGN IN POLAND. AUTUMN, 1914

(MAPS III. AND IV.)

I

THE journey to Breslau was not exactly cheerful. I went through Allenstein and had dinner at the same hotel in which I had lived. Life had already resumed its old course as in times of peace. I was in Graudenz by the afternoon, and travelled through wind and rain, via Bromberg, to Posen, where I arrived in pitch darkness and spent the night.

I was connected in many ways with the province and town of Posen. My father, who was descended from a family of Pomeranian merchants, lived there until after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871. I myself had been stationed at Posen, and was glad to see it again. I was there from 1902 until 1904, as senior staff officer of the Headquarters Staff of the 5th Corps. While holding this position (and also my previous one of senior staff officer of the 9th Division at Glogau) I had an opportunity of seeing the difficulties that confront the administration of this province. I had been in the district of Jarotchin and Pleschen for manœuvres. Poland has shown us no gratitude for what we have done for her. Those who had repeatedly warned Germany against her aspirations were quite right. With deep grief I see my native province faced with a period of much difficulty and sorrow.

On the morning of September 16th I arrived in Breslau. A telegram came almost immediately, saying that General Headquarters agreed to my proposal of the evening of the 14th.

General von Hindenburg, with the bulk of the 8th Army, was to go immediately to the support of the Austrian Army in Upper Silesia. This force was to form the 9th Army.

The following remained in East Prussia forming the 8th Army: 1st Cav. Div., 1st A.C., 1st R.C., 3rd Res. Div., von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, several Landwehr brigades, the Königsberg main reserve, and also the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses with the exception of the 35th Reserve Division, which had been formed mainly out of the garrison of Thorn. General von Schubert was placed in command.

The 9th Army was formed out of the 8th Cav. Div., the 11th, 17th and 20th A.C., the Guard R.C., the 35th Res. Div. and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division. Their concentration had to be settled. Landsturm, which, as a light frontier-guard, were in position on the Polish side of the frontier between Kattowitz and Thorn, were to cover their movements.

The Army Headquarters Staff wanted to deploy the army somewhere between Beuthen and Pleschen. General Headquarters, however, in view of the situation of the Austrian Army, thought it necessary that the movement should be more directly south-east, so that the fact that we were German reinforcements for Austria-Hungary and the Austrian Army might be more obvious. Accordingly, the 11th A.C., forming the right wing of the 9th Army, went to Cracow, and the left was brought down south to correspond. The proximity of the Austrians necessarily had the effect of cramping the movements of the 9th Army, but no serious disadvantages ensued.

On September 17th General von Hindenburg arrived at Breslau with some of the Staff. Once more we had been called upon to work together in an important military position.

I myself went on the 18th to Neu Sandec, the headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian Army. The journey, in wet, gloomy weather, was a new experience for me. It was my first visit to Upper Silesia, with its highly developed culture. In Galicia I became acquainted with what is probably the most neglected region in Europe, and gained some idea of Polish husbandry. The Polish Jew is very backward, even more so than those of

his faith and race in Poland proper. This is not altogether the fault of this people, but partly attributable to their Government.

In Neu Sandec I reported myself to the Archduke Frederick, a man with the warm heart of a German and a genuine, soldierly character. I remember him with feelings of the highest esteem. The " brain " of the operations of the Austrian Army was General von Conrad, a clever and distinguished general of great mental adaptability. He was a strategist with an unusually fertile mind, and always instilled fresh vitality into the Austro-Hungarian Army. That must always stand to his credit.

Unfortunately the Austrian Army was not always strong enough to carry out his bold plans. Too little had been done for the Army in times of peace. It had been openly neglected, and, unlike our Army in Germany, had not that prestige in its own country which encourages energetic action. The flower of the combatant Officers' Corps, who had held the Army together in spite of conflicting nationalities, had fallen by that time; those who remained left much to be desired in many cases, and failed to cement the fabric of the Army. The old true and valiant soldier-stock had also fallen on the battle-field.

The Austro-Hungarian Army was quite differently trained from the German Army. Up to that time General von Conrad had not thought very highly of our peace-time training. He now acknowledged to me that he was in favour of its principles. In particular he was convinced that it is impossible to attach too much importance to anything that strengthens discipline. The General Staff of the Austro-Hungarian Army laid too much stress on theory, and had neglected field-duty. Too many orders were given from above, and any inclination for independent action or personal responsibility was suppressed.

The Lines of Communication were well organized, but absorbed an enormous number of officers.

My relations with General von Conrad were always very pleasant, especially at our occasional meetings. I often had the impression that the Austrian Liaison Officer on my Staff did not report facts only, but gossip as well. The Liaison Officer of an allied power has a particularly important mission. He can

easily do harm, and for that reason must be a man of exceptionally strong character.

Both past and future operations were discussed. In the course of its retreat the Austrian Army had retired over the San and even the Wislok. More than forty of its divisions were now crowded together on the west bank of the Wislok, between the Carpathians and the Vistula. I could not understand how there could be room there, but, as I heard later, the heavy losses in prisoners explained the situation. The Army was terribly exhausted. Acting on his own responsibility and trusting to Germany's help, General von Conrad undertook to take the offensive again early in October, even if the Austrian Army had meanwhile to retire still further under Russian pressure.

The concentration of the 9th Army already protected the northern wing of the Austrian Army against possible envelopment. It was to get in line with the latter, and to join in its forward movement north of the Vistula. The allied armies were then to attack the Russians wherever they found them. At the same time the 9th Army was to keep a sharp look-out on its exposed left wing and left flank.

On the Russian side there were only a few cavalry divisions and rifle-brigades in the broad bend of the Vistula, open on the west. These had not been able to prevent the German covering frontier-force from taking up positions on Polish soil, or von Woyrch's Landwehr Corps from marching right across Poland, through Radom to the Vistula and crossing north of the confluence of the San. This corps had given assistance to the Austrian Army on the east side of the river before the latter's defeat.

The main body of the Russian armies was still to the east, with weak detachments west of the San. The troops which had been defeated in East Prussia were behind the upper Narew and the Niemen. The Siberian Army Corps had not all arrived on the western frontier of Russia. Some of them were still on the way. They were particularly good, and gave us a great deal of trouble.

It had been a bitter disappointment that our diplomacy had

not succeeded in keeping Japan from joining our enemies. That was the result of our unfortunate policy in pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for Russia after the peace of Shimonoseki in 1895, and preventing Japan from seizing Port Arthur. Russia never gave us any thanks for this, and it did us infinite harm with Japan. She naturally could not understand what interest we had in weakening her position.

The ultimatum handed to us by the Japanese Government in August, 1914, is said to have corresponded word for word with our ultimatum of 1895. We spoke at that time of the restoration of Port Arthur; now Japan spoke of the restoration of Kiaochau. The Japanese knows how to take his revenge!

As regards prospective operations it was to be expected that the Russians would pursue the Austrian Army, in spite of all the difficulties an advance involved. The area south of the Sandomir–Cracow stretch of the Vistula was indeed much too narrow for the Russians. An invasion of Hungary was out of the question for them at that time, as they ran the risk of being defeated north of the Carpathians. It could be taken for granted that the Russians would also advance below the confluence of the San; in what strength and on what length of front depended essentially on whether they knew of the new German reinforcements and how they had taken their defeat in East Prussia.

As a matter of fact, the pursuit by the Russians across the San and the investment of Przemysl were undertaken by weak forces only. In the first place they temporarily reinforced their troops on the Niemen. Immediately afterwards, however, when they realized the significance of the German advance, all their forces, including the newly-arrived Siberian Army Corps, were employed for a powerful advance across the Vistula on a wide front from Warsaw to the confluence of the San. The movement was in course of development during our conferences at Neu Sandec. We had to prepare for the imminent advance of the Russians across the San and north of the upper Vistula. In order to meet this, and bearing in mind the possibility of a flanking movement from Warsaw, it seemed advisable to bring part of the Austrian Army, which was crowded up, and our

own Landwehr Corps to the north bank of the Vistula. The Austrian Army south of the Vistula was still strong enough to meet any demands that might be made on it.

Most of the transport supplied for our columns and trains was too heavy for the Polish theatre of war. In any case, we had not enough of them. I therefore asked General von Conrad to requisition light transport, and he let us have all we wanted. It consisted of quite light vehicles, drawn by small, hardy horses and driven by peasants. These were soon given the nickname of " Panje " transport. " Panje " horses and " Panje " wagons distinguished themselves on the Western Front also. The origin of the name was the habit of drivers addressing one another as " Panje," meaning " sir." Our men also used to address them in that way.

The military conferences at Neu Sandec ended satisfactorily in complete harmony of views. A single command was not established, for General von Hindenburg and I preferred to remain independent.

In the course of the discussions about the delimitation of the prospective lines of communication it looked as though there would be friction. Austria-Hungary has always looked after her own interests in a measure which is not justified by her military achievements. She acted rightly from her point of view, but it was certainly regrettable that the Berlin authorities always gave way. They feared that Austria would make a separate peace with the Entente, which I believed to be a physical impossibility. However, in September, 1914, the demarcation of the lines of communication was made in accordance with German requirements, and there was no friction with the Austrian High Command.

II

The 9th Army was ready for operations on September 27th. Army Headquarters were at Beuthen. The dispositions were :

11th A.C.,	due north-east of Cracow.
Guard R.C.,	between Kattowitz and Kreuzburg.
20th A.C.,	
17th A.C.,	
35th Res. Div.,	
8th Cav. Div.,	between Kempen and Kalisz.
Count von Bredow's	
Landw. Div.,	

The three last divisions formed one unit under General von Frommel. The Landsturm formations guarding the frontier were made fit for simple duties in the line by being formed into brigades and supplied with artillery from the fortresses.

To the east of the Vistula the nearest strong German force was a part of the 8th Army, near Mlawa. Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division was bombarding Osowiec. The rest of the 8th Army had pressed forward as far as the line of the Niemen between Grodno and Kovno, in order to give the impression that the Germans intended to continue the offensive there.

On September 29th Rennenkampf, who had received not inconsiderable reinforcements, attacked here, and during the following weeks forced the 8th Army back to—and near Lyck over—the frontier.

The 8th Army was, of course, under the command of General von Hindenburg. But we were so much occupied with our own affairs, and further, communications were so bad (and becoming worse), that we were unable to exercise any control over the operations of our old army. This was not possible until November, when the 9th Army received a separate army commander and General von Hindenburg was relieved of the direct command of it in the field. The coming operations of the

9th Army were in no way affected by events on the front of the 8th Army.

On our right wing the situation of our Allies had considerably improved. The Russian pursuit over the Wislok was only half-hearted. The Austro-Hungarian Army was able to take breath and begin its advance early in October. The 1st Army, under General von Dankl (destined for the advance north of the upper Vistula), and the Landwehr Corps were waiting south of the river, between the Dunajec and Cracow, to conform to the advance of the 9th Army.

This corps deserves more detailed notice. It consisted of a division of Posen and Silesian Landwehr. We had originally intended to use it principally for frontier defence. But, as always happens, wherever troops may be, they get drawn in when fighting is going on. Thus in August the Landwehr Corps had joined in the advance into Poland and across the Vistula. This had involved a good many improvised arrangements among the divisions. After the crossing of the Vistula they joined in the heavy fighting in which the Austro-Hungarians were engaged south of Lublin. They then accompanied the Austrian Army in its retreat through the Tanev region, a roadless waste of marsh and forest east of the lower San.

As early as August the Landwehr Corps had been placed under General von Hindenburg's command. But we were unable to intervene and had to leave the Corps Commander complete freedom in making his decisions. This was all the easier for us as that excellent officer General von Woyrsch, and Colonel Heye his splendid Chief of the Staff, were well known to us.

Shortly before my departure from Insterburg a motor driver turned up with some documents and reported that these were such of the archives of the Landwehr Corps as had been saved. He explained that the corps had been annihilated and General von Woyrsch and his Chief of Staff killed. It was not until some days later that we were able to ascertain the facts and realize that the rumours were false.

The corps had succeeded in fighting its way through. We at Breslau immediately got into touch with them and saw to it

that they were re-equipped and brought up to strength as far as possible. At their request they also received some heavy artillery. We were only able to supply them with a Landwehr battalion which had old field howitzers. They were very heavy for the bad roads, but the value of heavy artillery was estimated so highly that all difficulties were overcome. The mobility of artillery is often sacrificed to an excessive regard for the cost of employing it.

The achievements of the Landwehr Corps may be looked back upon with pride by all who took part in them. They afford conclusive proof of the high quality of our Army, the perfection of our organization and the remarkable value of the training and education of our soldiers before the war. These things enabled us in increasing measure to conduct the war in the East with Landwehr and Landsturm formations.

III

The advance north of the Vistula began on September 28th.

The 1st Austrian Army wheeled to the right towards the lower Nida and advanced against the Sandomir–Opatoff line.

The different units of the 9th Army received the following instructions for the advance:

Landwehr Corps: on the Proschowitz–Pintschow–Opatow line.

11th A.C.: Jendrtscheiev–Lagow.

Guard R.C.: Chentziny, Kielce, Ostrowiec.

20th A.C.: Vloszezowo, Bschin, Ilsha.

17th A.C.: Novo Radomsk, Konsk–Radom.

35th Res. Div.: Petrikov to Tomassow.

8th Cav. Div. and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division: in the general direction of Kolivszki Station, east of Lodz.

No further news of the enemy had been received and at the start they did not offer any resistance but retreated before our advance.

Headquarters went to Wolbrom, then to Miechow and Jendrtscheiev. Wolbrom was only a factory; and the two others

had all the characteristics of the small, dirty Polish towns. Bugs were all in the day's work. At Miechow we were very far forward. Cossack patrols were reconnoitring in the district, and General von Woyrsch, coming to report to General von Hindenburg, had to make a detour to avoid them.

At Kielce we had decent quarters again with good rooms for offices. That made the work easier.

The strain to which our troops were subjected during the advance was enormous. The roads were mere mud and the weather was bad. In spite of this very long marches of 30 kilometres and more had to be accomplished if the enemy was to be caught crossing the Vistula or held on the far bank.

Each day made it more clear to me that our plan of operations must be for the Austro-Hungarian Army to seek a decision south of the Vistula, relieve Przemysl and cross the San, whilst the group to the north of the Vistula held back somewhat. This would only be possible if the enemy had retired behind the Vistula. If he chose to make a strong stand on the west bank, as he might do at any moment, we should be too weak to resist him successfully. We perfected this plan during and after the conference at Neu Sandec. It had to be altered, both in scope and details. This campaign is distinguished by more vicissitudes than any other, and therefore deserves one of the first places in the annals of war.

Each day presented the Headquarters Staff with some fresh, difficult decision. The subordinate commanders had to act on their own responsibility. It was a bold plunge into the unknown and meant hard fighting and cautious withdrawals. Our weak forces were separated by long distances but all were governed by the same clear, determined will.

The movements of the troops depended to a great extent on the question of supply. The indescribable state of the roads and the bad weather were extremely unfavourable conditions for us. Even the great high road from Cracow to Warsaw was knee deep. It had a layer of mud a foot high. The work required to restore the roads was enormous and labour was scarce. The troops and road-mending companies worked indefatigably and

accomplished a great deal. When we returned, in the latter half of October, the roads had a totally different aspect. We had done a great work for civilization.

The conditions on the railway were equally difficult. The Kielce line, the most important from our point of view, passed through the Miechow tunnel which had been destroyed. Contractors had already been commissioned to restore it and the work was proceeding quickly considering the conditions. This tunnel had a history. It had been rendered useless this time by the Russians and in October restored by us.

In November it was destroyed by us. Then the Russians rebuilt it, but they destroyed it again in the summer of 1915; thereupon we repaired it once and for all. There were other extensive works to be carried out, as, for example, the conversion of the broad Russian gauge to the standard gauge, and the building of numerous bridges. Wonderful feats were accomplished. The railway to Kielce, and later to Radom, was ready considerably sooner than I anticipated. The restoration of the second, the standard gauge Vienna-Warsaw line from Czestochova through Novo Radomsk in the direction of Koliuszki Station, was begun and speedily finished. We were also successful in re-establishing several branch lines. But we were not able to complete the bridge near Sieradz on the Kalisz-Lodz line, and in that way secure through communication between the Polish and German railways in a direct east and west line.

Thanks to the untiring work of officers on my staff, Major Drechsel and Captains von Waldow and Sperr, the communications with the rear were soon in shipshape order. All difficulties were overcome so promptly that operations did not suffer at all.

The demands for technical material for purposes of communication were heavier than in East Prussia. The Russians had destroyed the few existing telegraph wires and cut down the poles. A few field-telegraph wires were laid, and we had to manage as best we could with these. We were not then so spoilt as we became later after the establishment of the trench communication system in the war of positions. The safest means of communication were motor cars and dispatch riders, the latter

in relays. The few wireless stations did good service. Here again I was always successful in getting a grasp of the situation and transmitting orders in time.

The inhabitants gave us no trouble. They were docile and did not resist the measures we took. The idea of calling them up for service against the Russians, which had frequently been mooted, proved impracticable. The so-called Polish Legion of the Austrian Army was mostly composed of Galician Poles who were liable for service in that Army. Only later was the full meaning of this brought home to me.

IV

On the 4th October the bulk of the Austrian Army, the 1st, 3rd and 4th Armies, began the forward movement; on the 5th they crossed the Wisloka. The Russians offered no serious resistance. By the 9th the Austrian forces had reached the river San, and forced their way into Przemysl.

On the 4th of October the Austrian 1st Army and the right wing of the 9th Army were engaged near Klimontoff and Opatoff with Russian rifle brigades, which came off very lightly. The 1st Austrian Army now shifted its centre of gravity to Sandomir, whilst the right wing of the 9th Army continued its advance towards the Vistula above its confluence with the San.

The 20th A.C. reached the region north-west of Kielce, and the 17th A.C., after a slight engagement, reached Radom and concentrated there. General Frommel's Corps had reached the Tomassov–Koliuszki Station line, and the 8th Cavalry Division was somewhere near Rawa. Between Kalisz and Thorn our frontier-defence troops slowly pushed their way into Poland. We also used them on our line of communications.

Meanwhile we were receiving continuous reports that Siberian Army Corps were being detrained at Warsaw, and that strong forces were pushing along the right bank of the Vistula north of its junction with the San. We had an impression that great enemy operations were in preparation against the 9th Army.

This confirmed me in my view of our own plans. We had to win and hold the Vistula line, while the Austrian Army obtained a definite decision by attacking and defeating the Russians on the San.

In particular our first task was to reach the probable crossing places between the confluence of the San and Ivangorod, and to isolate and, if luck were with us, seize the bridge-head on the near side of the fortress. Then we were to watch the line of the Vistula between Ivangorod and Warsaw. Finally we had to strike a blow at the Siberian Army Corps assembling south of Warsaw and, in so doing, invest, and if possible capture, the fortress.

The 9th Army alone was too weak to carry out these numerous tasks. The Austrian 1st Army would have to be called on too, and be brought up considerably further north.

The 9th Army was now deflected sharply northwards.

The 17th A.C., under General von Mackensen, received orders to advance on Warsaw.

General Frommel's group was put under his orders.

The 20th A.C. was to watch Ivangorod and prevent any crossing of the Vistula north of the fortress.

The Guard R.C. received similar instructions for the line of the Vistula south of the fortress up to Novo Alexandria inclusive.

The Landwehr Corps was to hold the Vistula line south of this point.

The 11th A.C. was incorporated in the Austrian 1st Army in order to stiffen it. It was to hold the Vistula line south to Annopol, and attempt a crossing itself if and when the San had been crossed further south. General von Conrad placed two cavalry divisions at our disposal, of which the 3rd was placed under the command of the 20th A.C. for observation work on the Vistula, and the 7th attached to General Frommel's Corps.

While these measures were being carried out severe fighting took place at various points.

The 17th A.C. swerved sharply to the left from Radom through Bialobrshegi, and as early as October 9th encountered Siberian

troops who were concentrating at and to the east of Grojec. After heavy fighting the enemy were thrown back on Warsaw. General von Mackensen followed close on their heels and drew General Frommel's left flank with him. Early on the 12th he was close to the south side of the fortress.

On the battle-field of the 9th an order was found on the body of a dead or wounded Russian officer which gave us information of the greatest importance.

One brigade of the 20th A.C. engaged the enemy near Kosjenice, north of Ivangorod, where he had crossed with weak forces. It was not successful in driving him back.

The Guard R.C. attacked hostile forces which had effected a crossing near Novo Alexandria and threw them back over the Vistula after very severe fighting, in which the Landwehr Corps took part.

Further to the south the Russians had not yet crossed the Vistula.

Our Headquarters were at Radom.

V

The army order found near Grojec gave us a clear picture of the enemy's intentions. The Grand Duke's plan of operations was conceived on a grand scale, exceedingly dangerous from our point of view. Far more than thirty Russian corps, densely massed to the right, were to sweep over the Vistula between Warsaw and the confluence of the San, which was itself to be crossed further south by other forces. The five divisions of Mackensen's Group were to be opposed by fourteen hostile divisions. The Grand Duke projected a strong encircling movement from the north against the 9th Army, combined with a simultaneous frontal attack against it and the Austrian armies, while he held the heights east of Przemysl with his left wing. To carry out this operation the Grand Duke drew on part of Rennenkampf's army also. If this plan succeeded the victory

of Russia, on which the Entente had counted in their strategical calculations, was assured.

I had not yet given up hope that the Austrian Army would beat the Russians east of Przemysl and cross the San. Yet the forces holding the line north of the confluence of the San needed some, though not necessarily large, reinforcements and it was imperative to strengthen our line considerably in the region of Warsaw and Ivangorod.

At the same time, the Landsturm of the 5th, 11th and 17th A.C., which had marched into north-west Poland, were brought forward to the lower Bzura.

The communications in our rear were subjected to a special examination for a retreat might only too easily be necessary. Preparations were made for the destruction of the railways, among other things, by placing in readiness an immense amount of explosives.

While from the 15th October General von Mackensen was defending himself south of Warsaw against strong enemy attacks, the Russians attempted again and again to cross the Vistula further south. It was found necessary to push forward the 37th Infantry Division of the 20th A.C. to Kalvaria. This division prevented the river from being crossed at this point, but the enemy corps, which had managed to place some of its units on the left bank, came out of the engagement without serious losses. The division remained in that neighbourhood and was also placed under General von Mackensen's command.

The 41st Infantry Division and the Austrian 3rd Cavalry Division were posted at the mouth of the Pilica and south wards to Kosjenice.

The Guard R.C. had taken over the investment of Ivangorod. This corps attempted to throw back the enemy forces which were still on the left bank of the Vistula near Kosjenice, and in this task received assistance from a brigade of the 11th A.C., which had been placed at its disposal by the Army Command.

I shall never forget the battle near Kosjenice. What actually happened was that four brigades were posted in the narrow bend of the Vistula which had become a swamp owing to heavy rain.

The brigade in front of Ivangorod had been thrown back by a strong Russian sortie. I was afraid that the Russian attack might strike into the flank of those four brigades which were very cramped in their defence as they had no room to manœuvre. I did not sleep a wink that night. The next morning the position before Ivangorod did not appear so dangerous. As the Russians attacked, the fighting in the marshes near Kosjenice continued. All the troops who participated in these engagements look back on them with horror.

In consequence of the northerly march of the Guard R.C., the Landwehr Corps had taken over the duty of watching the crossing near Novo Alexandria.

While the battle at Kosjenice was in full swing I received an aeroplane report that strong enemy forces had crossed the Vistula south of Ivangorod also. If this were the fact our position would have been exceedingly serious. The Army Command had no reserves of any kind at its disposal; everything had been thrown in. It was lucky for us that this report proved false. The aviator had wrongly identified the battle-field of Kosjenice as lying south of Ivangorod.

Nothing particular was reported from the Landwehr Corps. The Russians had been prevented from throwing a bridge across the river at Kasimierz, south of Novo Alexandria, and higher up the enemy was awaiting events.

Our plan of securing the line of the Vistula had succeeded, but Warsaw and Ivangorod still remained in the hands of the enemy and he had effected a crossing, though a very uncomfortable one, at Kosjenice, north of Ivangorod.

VI

The Austrian Army to the south of the Vistula had not succeeded in crossing the river San or gaining any ground east of Przemysl. General von Conrad was none the less still hopeful of success.

The longer the decision south of the river San was delayed,

the more urgent became the need of reinforcing the left wing of the 9th Army in view of its increasingly critical situation. This question of reinforcement was closely affected by events on the San. If progress were made there, we could take considerable risks near Warsaw ; if not, we should be crushed there.

The arrival of reinforcements would save the situation for a while ; but reinforcements were not to be obtained from General Headquarters, for they had sent the newly-formed army corps to Ypres and the 15th Reserve Corps to East Prussia, where the situation had become more serious.

The Army Command proposed that the Guard Reserve, the Landwehr and the 11th Army Corps, defending the line of the Vistula should be relieved by Austrian troops and brought up north ; or, better still, that Austrian troops should be employed to reinforce our left wing, in which case the German troops, which were by now familiar with the Vistula sector, could stay there, thus guaranteeing the safety of the Vistula line. Besides, these relief operations would take up precious time, and the situation permitted of no delay.

General von Conrad was also convinced of the necessity of reinforcing the battle line north of the river Pilica, but he most emphatically vetoed the utilization of Austrian troops, with the exception of two cavalry divisions. We approached General Headquarters and His Majesty the Kaiser approached the Emperor Franz Joseph, who returned a favourable reply. The Austrian High Command held to its views, and the relief of the three Prussian corps was ordered.

By General von Conrad's orders, the exchange was to be carried out by parts of the 1st Army, in front of Ivangorod, in such a way as to leave the crossings open. The Austrian troops were then to throw the pursuing Russians back into the Vistula. We strongly opposed this plan, but Fate was to take its course.

The Austrian infantry divisions of the 1st Army which were to relieve the Landwehr Corps and the Guard Reserve Corps on the Vistula came up slowly. The relief of all the units could not be accomplished before the 20th. In the meanwhile the situation before Warsaw had reached a point at which a decision

was urgently called for. The enemy's enveloping movement became more obvious from day to day, and his pressure round Novo-Georgievsk and Warsaw was continually increasing.

A period of intense anxiety began. To accept battle would have been too dangerous. It became evident that an hour would soon come when General von Mackensen would have to be withdrawn from in front of Warsaw. But this would have to be done neither too early nor too late. It was indeed a difficult decision. What would the country say ?

On the evening of October 17th I considered that the moment had arrived to order the retirement. I asked General von Hindenburg to withdraw General von Mackensen's group from Warsaw west-south-west to the Rawa–Skierniwice–Lowicz line. There was hope that there would just be time to bring the relieved Landwehr Corps into line north of the Pilica between Novo-Miasto and Rawa. By these movements a new front would have been offered to the Russian attack. It is true that its left wing would only have been insufficiently protected by Landsturm and cavalry, but it was possible, if necessary, to withdraw it. If the Russians took the bait it was within the bounds of possibility to attack them in flank across the Pilica east of Novo-Miasto, using the 20th and the 11th A.C. and the Guard R.C., which would already have been concentrated there, or could not be far away. A decision might thus be secured. By these operations we would gain time. After all, we must know some time whether the Austrian Army south of the San had been successful.

Unfortunately, this became more and more doubtful. In fact, as early as the night of October 17th–18th, it was the Russians who crossed the San, and thus did what the Austrian Army had not been able to accomplish.

General von Mackensen marched away from Warsaw in the night of the 18th–19th. The movements, which had long been prepared, were carried out in exemplary order. The enemy took no booty, and it was only gradually that he took up the pursuit vigorously.

On the 25th and 26th October, General von Mackensen, the

Landwehr Corps (which had arrived in time) and the 37th Infantry Division were attacked very violently in their new positions north of Novo-Miasto. The left wing had to swing back in the direction of Lodz and the 37th Infantry Division had to be withdrawn to the south bank of the Pilica. For the rest,

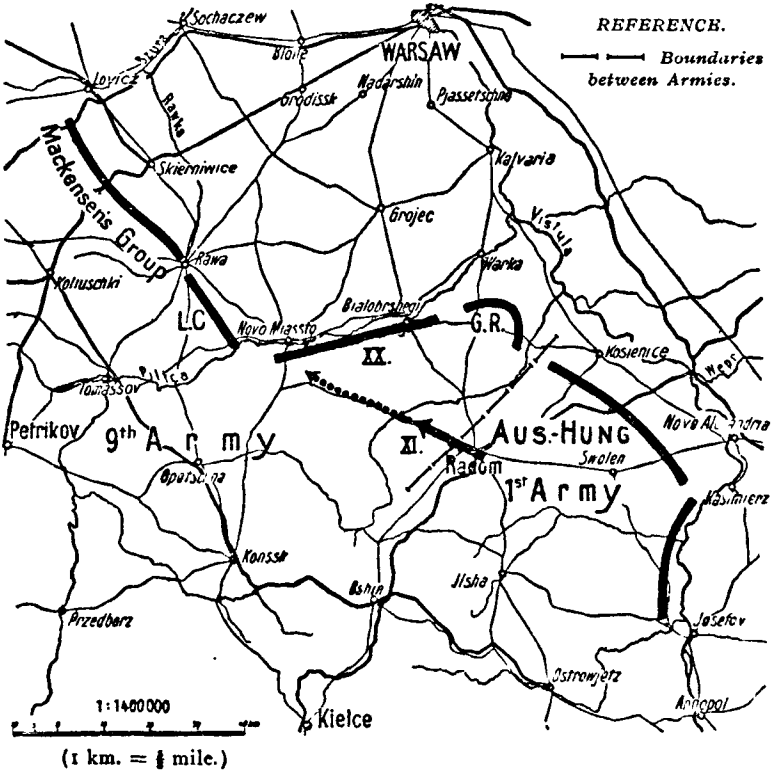


Fig. 4. **The Campaign in Poland.** Position at the end of October, 1914, after the retreat from Warsaw.

we remained masters of the situation in the following days of heavy fighting. But the attack across the Pilica was outside the bounds of possibility. The Austrians suffered a great reverse near Ivangorod, and retreated to Radom.

So things had turned out as our Headquarters had feared. The Austrian 1st Army which had been on guard before Ivangorod since the 21st October, had allowed too many Russians

to cross the Vistula; instead of driving the enemy back they were driven back themselves.

With the Guard R.C. we did our best to prevent disaster on the Austrian left; but in vain. The Russians pressed forward from Novo Alexandria and Ivangorod and crossed the Vistula at the mouth of the Pilica also.

I only learnt casually of the Austrian 1st Army's decision to fall back on Radom. Lieut.-Colonel Hoffman immediately entered a protest on behalf of the Guard R.C. The Austrian 1st Army managed to hold on for a few hours, which was something to be thankful for. Help had been sent to the Guard R.C., but an attack over the Pilica in a north-south direction was not to be thought of, as the troops protecting its right flank were giving way.

The 11th A.C. was moved by forced marches to the region north-east of Lodz, to support the left wing of Mackensen's group.

The situation had entirely changed owing to the Austrian Army having retired from Ivangorod to Radom. A strong forward movement on the whole of the Vistula front was to be expected from the enemy. We doubted whether the Austrian troops would be able to resist them. South of the Vistula too, the Austrian position had become increasingly critical. All hope of a favourable decision by force of arms had finally vanished. If the 9th Army stood where it was it would ultimately be surrounded and defeated. The destruction of the Austrian Army would then follow as a matter of course. The 9th Army had to be withdrawn in order to be able to operate again. It was clear that this movement would affect the Austrian troops but the Russian attacks would have compelled them to retire in any case.

The subsequent Austro-Hungarian complaint that their army had retired because the 9th Army was withdrawn is both true and untrue. It conceals the fact that the retirement of the 9th Army was solely due to the breakdown of the Austrian Army which had fought so gallantly at the beginning of the war, but had not yet recovered from the effects of the Battle of Lemberg.

VII

The order for the retreat, which had entered the sphere of probability for some time, was issued on the 27th. The situation was highly critical. The operations in October had gained us time, but had not been successful. We had now to expect that very crisis—the probable invasion of Posen, Silesia and Moravia by Russian armies in superior force—which should have been prevented by our deployment in and advance from Upper Silesia at the end of September.

The general lines of the retirement were already familiar to the German troops. They had been instructed over and over again to send everything they could do without to the rear. On the whole this had been done, though here and there there was more in the forward areas than there should have been. The problem of getting our heavy transport over the bad roads gave me the acutest anxiety.

The retirement was to be carried out in a westerly direction if possible, thereby escaping the enemy's enveloping movement.

On the whole, our " strategic retreat," as it was christened by the soldiers, was carried out according to plan and in perfect order. The countryside was spared. This retreat will be for all time an example of prudent and humane warfare.

The Guard R.C. had a hard time of it on the right wing for the resistance of the Austrian 1st Army was crumbling steadily, and it kept yielding to the enemy's frontal attacks.

The Austrian armies retired on both sides of the Vistula till they were on a level with Cracow and part of their forces found themselves right in the Carpathians south-west of Przemysl.

Of the 9th Army the following units had to retreat :

The Guard R.C., 20th A.C. and Landwehr Corps—past the Kielce–Tomassov line, half-way to the Cracow–Czestochova line north of Czestochova.

The 17th A.C. and General Frommel's Corps—through the

Petrikov–Lodz line, in touch with the Landwehr Corps, on Wielun.

Positions had been prepared round Czestochova and Wielun. The 11th A.C., south-west of Sieradz.

Between the rivers Prosna and Warta, the 5th Cavalry Division, which had come from the Western Front, the 8th Cavalry Division and the 7th Austrian Cavalry Division were concentrating under General von Frommel who now gave up his command of the 35th Reserve Division and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division.

The Landsturm formations went back to the Kalisz–Wreschen–Thorn line.

The Russians followed at full strength. They also attacked us very heavily in East Prussia and near Mlawa. The position became very serious. We longed for an opportunity of resuming the offensive, but with the Austrian Army so near such an operation would have been very hazardous, and, in any case, the offensive could only have been a frontal attack. We should only have failed.

A further serious decision had now to be taken. I was more and more convinced that our only course was to send a large part of the army round by rail to Hohensalza and Thorn, and from there bring them down along the Vistula in the Lodz–Lowicz direction, so that they could fall on the flank of the Russians and bring their advance to a standstill. What forces could be spared for this operation was a further question.

Our first business was to delay the Russians as long as possible and keep them away from the German railways. The destruction of railways and roads had been prepared for in a very wholesale manner. Experience had taught us that a modern army cannot operate more than one hundred and twenty kilometres from its railheads. If this were true, and we were able to destroy the railways as thoroughly as I hoped, we could count on bringing the Russian masses to a temporary standstill, even without fighting, before they reached our frontier. In spite of all our preparations it was not an easy matter to carry out the

destruction of the railways, for the troops were always wanting to defer the operation. But there was no help for it. I gave the orders and saw they were carried out. Captain Sperr assisted me splendidly. Without more ado the troops demolished the road bridges. An immense amount of work was accomplished.

I had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy advance gradually slow down, and actually come to a standstill at the very distance I have mentioned, and this though we had left behind large stores, the destruction of which I had forbidden.

VIII

At the end of October General von Falkenhayn summoned me to Berlin. General von Conrad had suggested to him that large forces from the West should be sent to the Eastern Front. General von Falkenhayn spoke hopefully of the attack near Ypres and wanted to defer further decision. I was not able to give him precise information as to the plans of our staff. Nothing had yet been decided.

In Berlin I felt that I was in another world. The difference between the immense strain under which I had been living since the beginning of the war and the way of life in Berlin was too great. The passion for amusement and pleasure reigned supreme. People did not seem to realize the seriousness of our position in the war. I was unpleasantly impressed and felt like a stranger. I was glad to get back to Czestochova and the friendly circle of my comrades.

On the morning of the 3rd of November I was convinced that our situation must be handled altogether differently. I asked General von Hindenburg to agree to a plan which had been previously discussed, of a fresh concentration in the region of Hohensalza. Orders to this effect were immediately given, and we informed General Headquarters of this decision.

General Headquarters had watched the development of events in the East with the greatest concern.

The situation round Mlawa and on the east frontier of East Prussia became more perilous every day. The newly-formed 25th R. C. which had been sent to East Prussia as reinforcements had fought heroically. But it soon became apparent that the fighting value of the new formations was far below that of units composed of men who had had long service with the Colours and were commanded by young and active officers. These new formations had splendid material in their rank and file but they were not as yet real soldiers. Their courage and devotion did not make up for their lack of training. Further, the large number of reserve officers who found fresh employment in these new formations did their level best, but also lacked experience. There were exceptions, of course.

An army is not made in a few weeks—long training and tradition are required. This was also proved by the English divisions and American troops. They, too, have had to pay a very heavy price for their intrepidity. The 25th R.C. had not been able to effect any appreciable change in the situation on the frontiers of East Prussia.

It was now to be expected that the Grand Duke, with his enormously superior forces, would not only make a decisive attempt to drive Germany and Austria out of the bend of the Vistula, but also directly invade Germany east of the Vistula, and try to secure a decision, or at least prevent us from moving our troops about.

On the whole eastern frontier of the kingdom of Prussia battles would soon be in progress which would obviously act and react closely upon one another. A single, resolute command was called for. This question had already been discussed at the time of my meeting with General von Falkenhayn in Berlin. On the 1st of November His Majesty appointed General von Hindenburg Commander-in-Chief in the East, at the same time relieving him of his position as Commander of the 9th Army. At our suggestion, General von Mackensen was given this post. I remained Chief of Staff to General von Hindenburg. The majority of my colleagues were attached to the new staff.

The sphere of command of the Commander-in-Chief in the

THE CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH POLAND, AUTUMN, 1914

East now extended definitely over the 8th and 9th Armies, and the staffs of the 1st, 20th, 17th, 2nd, 5th and 6th Army Corps in the provinces of East and West Prussia, Pomerania, Posen and Silesia, with the fortresses in those areas.

Subsequently Zastrow's Corps on the Soldau–Mlawa line, now under the orders of the 8th Army Headquarters, was brought under the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief in the East.

This linking-up of the commands turned out well. It relieved the Commander-in-Chief of the details of army command in the field. All the same, there were occasions when it was necessary to encroach on the jurisdiction of the armies by means of direct orders to their commanders. I did not much like intervening in this way, and at first perhaps I did so less than I should. I hope I hit on the right course later on.

The headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief in the East were moved to Posen. We had our quarters in the Royal Palace, and remained there until the beginning of February, 1915. This was a particularly harassing and busy time. Here began that regular way of life which I led until my resignation.

IX

All of us at General Headquarters were thoroughly imbued with a sense of our enormous responsibility and had no illusions at to what was at stake. In Posen it was easier than in Poland to feel the pulse of the home country and realize its fear of a hostile invasion, with all its terrible consequences. We could not help aggravating that fear by our military measures. The issue of the approaching battles was uncertain. The Russian superiority in numbers was great, our troops were much exhausted, and our Allies had but little fighting value.

From the frontier provinces the youths capable of bearing arms were removed. Strategical positions were reconnoitred and orders given for their construction. The mines in several districts of Poland had already been rendered unworkable, and

measures were now taken for the demolition of the German railways and mines in the frontier districts. The G.O.C. of the 6th Corps district, in response to my request, had approached several mining experts in his province, and asked their advice as to the best method of destroying the mines in Upper Silesia. The execution of the necessary measures was now decided on. Terror at once spread through the province. I had to make it impossible for the Russians to use the mines for a long time. Military interests made it imperative. Later on in the war the English destroyed the Rumanian oil-fields even more ruthlessly. Coal is of equally vital importance for waging war. As it happened, the opinion of a higher authority was taken, and it proved possible to modify the scheme of destruction somewhat.

The attitude of the Polish inhabitants of our frontier provinces was not conciliatory. They were very reserved and aloof. No clear-sighted man could have expected anything different.

In view of our inferiority in numbers, it was very important for the approaching decision that we should draw on the Prussian eastern fortresses and the various Corps Districts under our control for all such available troops and war material as could be utilized for active operations in the field. We had made a start with this system as far back as August, 1914, and in course of time we were able to form as large a number of divisions in the East out of Landsturm, Landwehr, and former fortress troops as General von Moltke had at his disposal for the Battle of Königgrätz. Later, these divisions were given numbers, just like the active divisions, but this did not change their special character. Of course, the demands made on these divisions, especially as regards fighting and marching, were not the same as those made on units composed of younger men; but this could not always apply in times of special stress. These troops did more than could reasonably be expected of them. They gave of their best in defence of hearth and home, wife and child.

The 8th Army, on the eastern frontiers of Prussia, had gradually been able to form several Landwehr divisions. From the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses and the Landsturm a

Frontier Defence Corps had been formed, comprising the Zastrow Corps, two divisions strong, which subsequently became the 17th R.C. The fortress of Thorn, which had its first Main Reserve —the 35th Reserve Division—in the line near Czestochova, gradually formed a new main reserve—known as von Dickhuth's Corps. This corps was subsequently employed on the right bank of the Vistula in the direction of Plock. The main reserve of Thorn was now von Westernhagen's Landsturm Brigade which had been brought up to the Bzura and withdrawn to Wloclawek during the retreat of the 9th Army.

The fortress of Posen also had given us one main reserve which had formed part of General Frommel's Corps and been brilliantly led by General Count von Bredow in the campaign in Poland. His Landwehr had no field kitchens; they attacked the Russians with the idea of procuring some—and got them. The fortress and province of Posen now produced further forces. The Posen Corps, which was concentrated round Kalisz, was a very strong division and had been equipped with great care. The Governor of Posen, General von Koch, and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Marquard, took the greatest trouble in the matter.

The G.O.C. of the 6th A.C. District was to form the Breslau Corps for frontier defence east of Kempen. It was a longish time before this was done and the corps was fit for the line.

Major von Bockelberg distinguished himself by the help he gave me in building up these new formations.

X

The more I thought about the problem ahead of us, and realized the position and our fearful peril, the firmer was my resolution, if possible, to turn the operation we had decided on at Czestochova into an overwhelming and annihilating blow. That alone could definitely save us. It was not enough to bring the enemy merely to a standstill. This idea was not a sudden inspiration, but had been slowly forming in my mind.

Such troops as the Commander-in-Chief in the East could spare

were assembled for the advance between Wreschen and Thorn. General von Conrad, with his soldierly insight, gave us all possible assistance.

The 8th Army had been weakened and could no longer fulfil the task of covering the eastern frontier of East Prussia. This army found operative support both in the newly-constructed positions between Lakes Spirding and Mauer and the fortified line of the river Angerapp. The army successively surrendered its very exhausted 25th R.C., of whose condition we learnt only later, and the 1st R.C., with the 1st and 36th Reserve Divisions. These troops were sent to Thorn, on their way to Wloclawek. The commander of the 8th Army, General Otto von Below, had now to husband his resources carefully, in order to be able to hold the positions which he might have to occupy in an emergency. It was essential, even though the performance of this task made exceptional demands on both commanders and men.

The Zastrow Corps received orders to hold fast at Soldau, for the existence of the 8th Army and the fate of East Prussia depended on it.

It would have been particularly useful if we could have strengthened this front. A strong advance from Mlawa towards the line of the Narew between Roshan and Pultusk would have been the most effective support for the operations on the left bank of the Vistula. But we had to limit our aims for the success of the flank attack on the left bank had to be assured. Otherwise our forces would merely have been dissipated. We did all that was possible in making Zastrow's Corps strong enough to constitute a certain threat to north Poland, and lead the enemy to believe, if only for a short time, that an offensive here was really intended. Strong Russian forces were concentrated north of Novo-Georgievsk. It was important for the battle on the left bank of the Vistula that they should be held there.

The Westernhagen Brigade and, later, a portion of the new main reserve, both from Thorn, were available for the forward movement up the right bank of the Vistula. We had thought of sending them up towards Plock, so as to convey a false impression in conjunction with Zastrow's Corps. Beyond Plock, it

might be possible to bring them over and use them in the battle on the left bank of the Vistula.

The headquarters of the 9th Army went to Hohensalza.

Those units of the 8th Army intended for Thorn, the 1st and 25th R.C., were to be put under the command of the 9th Army.

The 20th A.C. and the 3rd Guard Div. which had come from Upper Silesia, were detrained south of Hohensalza, and the 17th Army Corps near Gnesen.

Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps, with the 6th and 9th Cavalry Divisions which had come from the West, were concentrated at the same place.

The 11th A.C. was marched on the German side of the frontier, through Ostrowo to the neighbourhood of Wreschen.

General Frommel's Cavalry Corps had skirmishes with Russian cavalry between the rivers Prosna and Warta, east of Kalisz, and formed a screen behind which the Posen Corps took up its positions.

The Landsturm, which joined the Breslau Corps later, held the line, a very thin one, to the neighbourhood of Wielun. From there to half-way to the Czestochova–Cracow line was General von Woyrsch, with the 35th Res. Div., Count von Bredow's Landwehr Div., the Landwehr Corps and the Guard R.C., minus the 3rd Guard Div. At this point they joined hands with the Austrian 1st Army whose front extended to the Vistula. To the south the rest of the Allied Army was again huddled up between the river and the Carpathians, while stronger forces were posted in the mountains for the protection of Hungary.

From this survey it will be seen that the actual blow against the enemy's flank could be carried out with but five and a half corps. Our forces for dealing with the enemy front from the point at which the Warta flows into German territory southward to the region of Czestochova were quite inadequate. General von Woyrsch had to act in conjunction with the Austrian Army. Whether the Austrians could take the offensive was still uncertain. Opinions on that point were once more very pessimistic.

To the question whether the Austrian 1st Army would be

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able to resist the impending hostile attack we received the answer that they would certainly be in a position to do so for twenty-four hours. The attack did not succeed. It was again greatly to General von Conrad's credit that he raised the *moral* of the army and revived the spirit of the offensive. But he would never have done it without German support.

We had intended to bring a considerable part of von Woyrsch's army up north, to add weight to the flank attack and strengthen our line. General von Conrad offered strong objection to this idea and so only the 3rd Guards Division was brought to Hohensalza to support the shock troops of the 9th Army.

General von Conrad railed General von Boehm–Ermolli with four infantry and two or three cavalry divisions round from the Carpathians, through Upper Silesia, to the north side of Czestochova.

In order to meet the wishes of General von Conrad, General von Woyrsch and his troops were placed under the Austrian High Command.

After the arrival of the Austrian troops, the Breslau Corps, still in process of formation, could be concentrated a little more. Of course these measures resulted in a certain stiffening of the front from the middle of November, but we were still too weak to deliver a big blow.

It was claimed later that the Austro-Hungarian Army had defended Upper Silesia. In reality they were defending their own homes, also north of Czestochova.

It was natural that in this situation our eyes should again turn to the West. I asked myself whether there was any chance of obtaining a success at Ypres, or whether it would not be better once and for all to restrict operations on the Western Front to a defensive, and carry out the contemplated operations against Russia with all our available forces. General von Conrad had suggested this in November.

This point of view seemed to me to be the right one, and I asked our High Command for reinforcements from the West. In addition to the two Cavalry Divisions, the despatch of further forces was contemplated; but these arrived too late and at

odd times. The operation on the flank could only attain a military decision if carried out as a surprise, that is, with speed, great concentration of force and in conjunction with a strong frontal attack. We dared not delay the beginning of operations in the East, even if we had seen our way absolutely clear as regards reinforcements on the 10th of November.

The troops which came from the Western Front had suffered so heavily in the fighting there that they were really no more fit for battle than the Eastern troops. The complete contrast between the conditions in the Polish theatre of war and those in the West must, necessarily, affect them adversely at first.

On the question whether, in view of the reinforcements sent to us from the West, something else could or should have been done, I cannot express an opinion, without knowledge of other factors. For that reason I am unwilling to offer any criticism. I have always held the view (even when I was a lecturer at the Kriegsakademie) that any criticism not founded on actual knowledge only reflects on the critic.

Shortly after the arrival of von Richthofen's Cav. Corps, which turned up just in time for the advance, von Hollen's Cav. Corps and the 2nd and 4th Cav. Divisions appeared. They were attached to Zastrow's Corps.

Later, but only after the forward movement had begun, the following units were assigned to us : the 3rd R.C., under General von Beseler, with the 5th and 6th Reserve Divisions; the 13th A.C., under General von Fabeck, with the 26th Infantry Division and 25th Reserve Division; the 2nd A.C., under General von Linsingen, with the 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions, and the 24th R.C., under General von Gerok, with the 47th and 48th Reserve Divisions. These were posted according to the requirements of the situation.

The means at our disposal at the beginning of operations on the 10th November were imperfect, but in spite of that, an attempt had to be made to deal the Russians such a blow as would not only bring their armies in the bend of the Vistula to a standstill once and for all, and so put an end to their offensive, but crush them decisively.

This would be accomplished, if we were able to force them back from Warsaw. If we were too weak to do this, we must content ourselves with the lesser result, and even that would be of great importance.

XI

In November fighting developed as anticipated. The Russian armies everywhere started upon the execution of the great tasks set them by the Grand Duke.

The 8th Army found itself attacked. Even though it had been depleted of the 1st and 25th R.C., it made an attempt to hold the East frontier of East Prussia against the overwhelming Russian assaults, but it was not able to do so permanently. Towards the middle of November, we withdrew it to the Masurian Lakes–river Angerapp position.

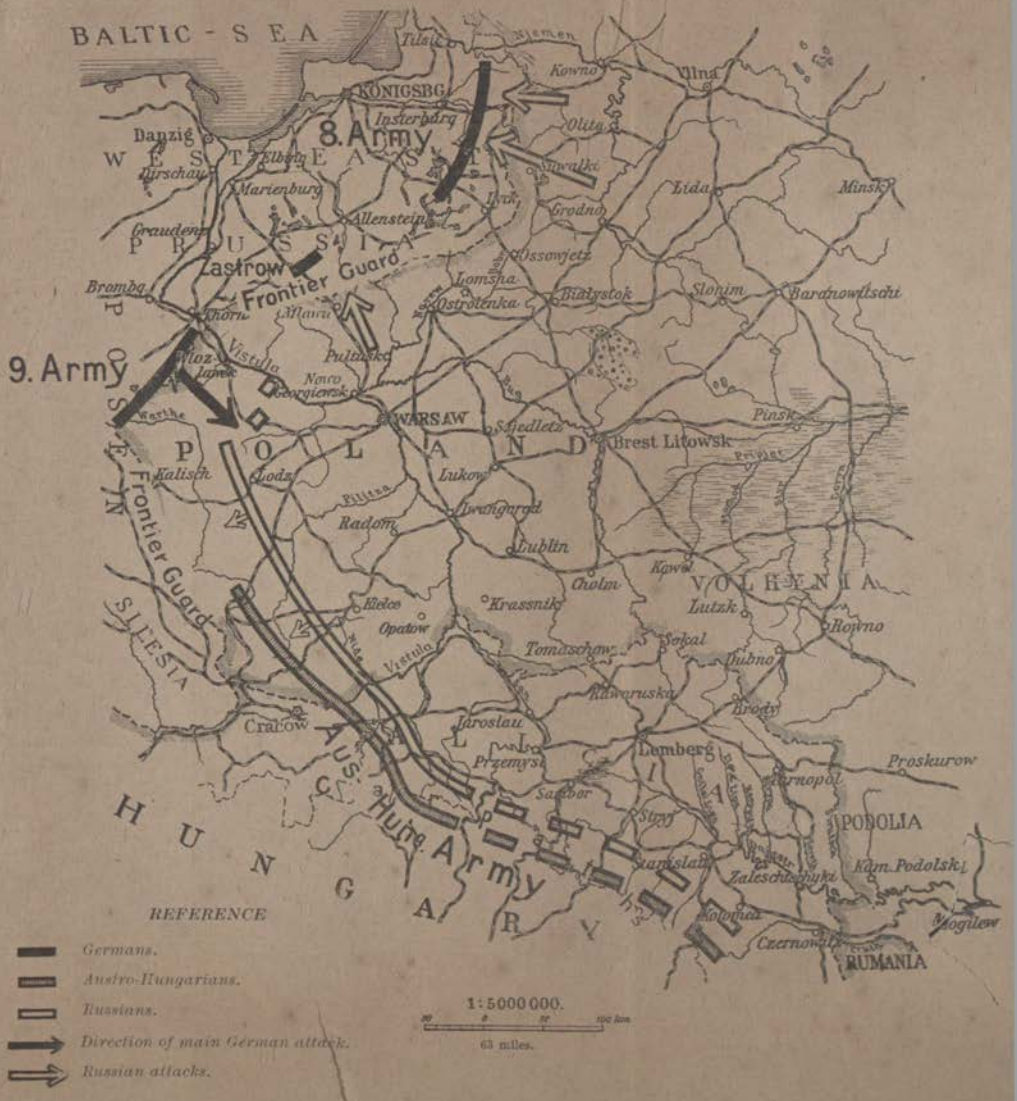
Thus the Eastern part of East Prussia was once more exposed to a Russian invasion. It suffered heavily, but, although this was to be foreseen, we could not help drawing on the 8th Army. The Russians followed close upon their heels and also attacked them in their new positions. In spite of all this we decided to bring the 1st Inf. Div. of the 9th Army up to join in the fighting, west of the Vistula. We staked much in order to attain our objective at this most important point.

Zastrow's Corps was assailed in its positions between Mlawa and Prasnysz and found itself forced to retire to the Soldau-Neidenburg line. Here the advance of the enemy was checked after heavy fighting. The whole situation east of the Vistula seemed gravely imperilled, and West Prussia, in particular, was immediately threatened, but Zastrow's Corps did its duty. We lived through many an anxious hour in Posen, but the arrival, in the middle of November, of von Hollen's Cavalry Corps on both wings improved the situation.

Von Westernhagen's Landsturm Brigade reached Plock, and, later on, was brought over to the left bank of the Vistula.

In the meantime, the deployment of the 9th Army had been

APPENDIX TO THE CAMPAIGN IN NORTH POLAND



carried out and completed according to plan. The railways had met the demands made upon them. As early as the evening of November 10th the army stood in readiness for the forward movement :

The 25th and 1st R.C. south of Thorn. Direction of advance, Wloclawec-Lowicz.

Von Richthofen's Cav. Corps, 20th A.C. and 3rd Guard Div., south of Hohensalza, with orders to march on Kutno.

17th A.C., south-east of Gnesen, march-direction Lentschytza.

11th A.C. east of Wreschen, march-direction Kolo–Dombe.

Frommel's Cav. Corps between Unieiov and Sieradz, march-direction Lodz.

Posen Corps on the Kalisz-Sieradz line, march-direction Lask.

From the Landsturm of the Breslau Corps little was to be expected, and the same applied to the Austrian Cavalry Division then on its way. Other forces were not yet in position. An offensive further south was not yet to be thought of. The idea of such a movement by General von Woyrsch alone, who had already felt strong Russian pressure, could not be considered for a moment.

In the bend of the Vistula, Wloclawec was in the hands of the Russians, otherwise the position as far as the river Warta was somewhat obscure. Here was the first Russian Army, which, however, still extended to the right bank of the Vistula. It was composed of from ten to fourteen divisions. We might certainly rely on there being from eight to ten divisions between the Vistula and the Warta. Immediately north of the Warta, strong Russian cavalry forces were pushing towards the frontier. The bulk of the Russian Army was in line from the Warta, north of Sieradz, through Novo Radomsk to the region north-east of Cracow. Other portions had arrived in Galicia on the river Dunajec and were thrusting into the Carpathians.

The hostile forward movement had come to a standstill, for the destruction of the railways had produced the intended effect. But there were now signs that a resumption of their advance was to be expected.

General von Mackensen began operations without delay on the 11th of November. We could only acquiesce in this. The Russians were taken completely by surprise, but even in the early days of our advance there was very heavy fighting, extremely expensive to both sides, near Wloclawec, Kutno and Dombe. The enemy were thrown back everywhere.

While the main body of the 9th Army pushed forward unceasingly to the Lodz-Kiliuszki Station line, General von Morgen covered their flank north of Lowicz with the 1st R.C. He was sorely pressed. At first he had to rely for protection on his own vigorous attacks, and then he had to meet an attack from a Russian Corps which had crossed from Novo Georgievsk to the left bank of the Vistula. Under the influence of the Mlawa situation this movement proceeded but slowly.

The centre of the 9th Army, von Richthofen's Cav. Corps, the 3rd Guard Div. and the 25th Reserve Corps finally broke the resistance offered them. It now crossed the Lowicz–Lodz line, and pushed far to the south past Brsheshiny, their attention fixed on the south and west, striving after a great success. An order from the 9th Army, of which I also knew, to secure its flank at Skierniwice did not reach them. Army Headquarters was not far enough forward.

The 20th, 17th and 9th A.C., which were very huddled up, met a strong hostile force north of Lodz on the 17th, and engaged it. Frommel's Cav. Corps and the Posen Corps advanced but slowly on the east bank of the Warta.

An intercepted wireless revealed to us that the Russians thought of retreating from Lodz. Our satisfaction was great. But the strong will of the Grand Duke held his forces where they were, as we learnt from a further wireless. We suffered a severe disappointment.

The Russian troops on the right bank of the Vistula, with the exception of certain units which were to remain near Mlawa, were ordered to cross the Vistula. It was a good thing that this operation was effected somewhat slowly; otherwise General von Morgen's position would have been made still more difficult.

. The defeated Russian forces retreating through Skierniewice

on Warsaw, were concentrated due west of the fortress, from which they were to resume their advance.

The Russian right wing concentrated round Lodz. Reinforcements from the front of the 2nd and 5th Russian Armies, which were not yet involved, pushed north on Koliuszki and west of Lodz. Here they took the 11th Army by surprise, and pressed them hard.

The reinforced 25th R.C., under its trusty leader, General von Schäffer-Boyadel, Chief of Staff Colonel von Massow, had pushed forward far beyond Brsheshiny by the 22nd. Portions of von Richthofen's Cav. Corps had neared Petrikov and Tomassov. The Infantry Divisions south-east of Lodz swung round west; great things were expected. Then the situation changed.

The 25th R.C. lost touch with the 20th A.C. The enemy near Lodz was not thrown back, but, on the other hand, pressed back the 20th A.C., and pushed his way in between the inner wings of the two corps. The Russian forces that had been rallied west of Warsaw pushed forward without opposition from Skierniewice to Brsheshiny. The 25th R.C. and the units with it were cut off, being attacked from the south by the portions of the 5th Russian Army which were marching on Koliuszki Station.

The details of the various engagements which now developed with the 3rd Guard Div., under General Litzmann, the 25th R.C. and von Richthofen's Cav. Corps, have been wonderfully described by Captain von Wulffen in a brochure. I can, therefore, refer to it. From enemy wireless messages we learnt in Posen, far from the battlefield, how hopefully the Russians regarded the situation, how they planned the various battles, how they already exulted at the thought of capturing various German corps. They were preparing trains in readiness for the transport of the prisoners. I cannot describe what I then felt. What was at stake? Not only the triumph of the enemy and the capture of so many brave men, but nothing less than a lost campaign. After this defeat, the 9th Army would have had to be withdrawn. What would then have been the position at the end of 1914?

The Brsheshiny episode closed with a brilliant feat of arms. The surrounded German troops broke through northwards on the night of the 24th–25th November. They took with them 10,000 prisoners and many captured guns.

The units that broke through were brought up between the 20th A.C. and the 1st R.C. In this way our front was made much more continuous, and the Russians hurled themselves upon it in vain. The great aim of our operations, the destruction of the Russians in the bend of the Vistula, had not been attained. We had not proved strong enough.

Meanwhile, General von Conrad had ordered that Boehm-Ermolli's Army, Woyrsch's detachment, and the Austrian armies as far as Cracow, should attack on November 17th. This action resulted in some local successes. It soon died down and ceased to have any strategical interest. From now on to the end of November the Russians pressed the 9th Army hard and attacked further south also, but without much success. At the end of November and beginning of December, when the 1st Division from the 8th Army and the reinforcements from the West had at last arrived, I had an opportunity of resuming (temporarily) my original plan of operations. At the same time, we had to consider how the enemy attacks could be held up, especially those against the 1st R.C., while these troops were being got into position.

Zastrow's Corps succeeded in taking Ciechanov and Prasnysz. The Russians had sent some troops from here to the left bank of the Vistula, but the cavalry divisions made no progress owing to bad weather. Further, the horses were not shod for a winter campaign. The enemy soon made a counter-attack, and Zastrow's Corps had again to withdraw to Mlawa. In the bend of the Vistula severe fighting had been resumed everywhere. The 3rd R.C. and the 13th A.C. were now placed under the command of the 9th Army, and posted on its left wing. In view of the serious position of the 1st R.C., this was done immediately after they came up. It did not result in concerted action. Perhaps it would have been wiser to propose the formation of a special Army Detachment, which could have been placed under the

direct orders of the Commander-in-Chief in the East. In this way we should have gained a firmer hold on the operations.

The left wing of the 9th Army had now been so strengthened that there was no longer cause for anxiety. It could slowly work its way towards the enemy's positions on the Bzura. But this movement was now merely in the nature of a purely frontal attack and not an enveloping movement on bold lines. At the same time, it was possible for us to attack along the whole front including Woyrsch's detachment. The 2nd A.C. had been sent to positions east of Sieradz, and the 48th Res. Div. to reinforce that part of the front held by the Breslau Corps. At the beginning of December, the attack made by the 2nd A.C. was crowned with success, and they pushed forward in the direction of Lodz. It was unfortunate that this success had not come a fortnight earlier.

The Russians evacuated Lodz on December 6th and retired behind the river Miashga. Further south, also, we now gained more ground owing to the enemy having weakened that part of his line in the latter half of November in order to hold Lodz.

On December 15th, Lowicz was taken by our northern wing, and on our front there was further local progress.

South of Cracow, the situation was acute by the end of November. The Austrian Army Staff had urgently asked for a German Division to reinforce the Austrian front. Reluctantly, we sent the 47th Res. Div. From a purely theoretical point of view this appeared to be a mistake—and events proved this to be true. The Division only just arrived in time to save the day. General von Conrad intended enveloping the Russian southern wing from the Carpathians. In order to make this plan possible, he had considerably thinned his front. In the eventful battle for Limanova and Sapanov, from the 3rd to the 14th December, he succeeded in beating the Russians west of the river Dunajec. It was a triumph for the Austro-Hungarian Army after the many reverses they had suffered since the beginning of the war.

Under the pressure of our progress in Poland and Galicia

the Russians fell back behind the Bzura–Rawka sector, the upper Pilica, the Nida and the Dunajec.

The enveloping forces of General Boroevic from the Carpathians soon came upon a very superior enemy who attacked them without hesitation. The Austro-Hungarian troops which were trying to envelop the enemy were forced back into the Carpathians. Here a state of affairs was developing which was destined to exercise influence of the utmost importance upon the plans for 1915.

In the bend of the Vistula, especially on the front of the 9th Army, some local fighting occurred which ought not to have taken place. We were still inexperienced in trench warfare. There was too much bickering. I should have pursued a bolder policy from the start. The danger was that the gain would not be commensurate with the loss. It is the duty of a leader to guard against that.

On the northern bank of the Vistula, the Russians took possession of Plock and penetrated as high up as Wloclawec. We were able to hold the heights along the left bank of the Vistula, east of the town, from which we controlled the railway line. Here, however, the flank of the 9th Army from the mouth of the Bshura to Wloclawec was too long and needed constant watching. As it happened the Vistula did not freeze and so no danger arose to this Army.

No change occurred in the situation on the southern frontiers of our country, east of the Vistula. The 8th Army was able, on the whole, to hold its lines, though fighting was constant and severe. A break-through by the Russians in a section of the line between the Masurian Lakes proved merely of local importance.

On all fronts there was diligent work on the improvement of our positions.

During the operations we had great trouble in getting the railway lines, which we had ourselves previously completely destroyed, into working order again. We worked now with might and main to restore them, but considerable time elapsed before the railway communications were really in order. The troops, who were everywhere exhausted, suffered much on

account of this. It was particularly regrettable that we were not able to get their Christmas parcels delivered in time. This gave considerable work to the railways, for at that time these tokens of affection flowed in very freely. Leave, too, could not be granted to the extent we desired.

Measures for the administration of the occupied part of Poland took up a great deal of time. They are now of no interest. The country had no reason to complain, even though the situation compelled us to remove valuable raw material.

We negotiated with Austria-Hungary on the question of the new boundaries of our respective lines of communication. Naturally, the agreements made by me in September, under other conditions, now needed alteration. Unfortunately, G.H.Q. and Berlin now interfered in the negotiations, probably at the instigation of Austria-Hungary. This did not help matters, as the authorities in question were not acquainted with the actual facts. But this also is now of no account. In the course of my duties, I was obliged to occupy myself with a number of military-political questions which brought me more annoyance than satisfaction.

A shadow fell on the proud satisfaction with which we contemplated the development of events on the Eastern front. The Austrian Army had suffered a heavy reverse in Serbia. At the end of November it had penetrated far into that country. Belgrade had been taken on the 2nd December. Austria-Hungary rejoiced greatly. Yet, as early as the days of the capture of Lodz and the battle of Limanova, the Austrian troops were retiring from Serbia, defeated. They were no longer an effective fighting instrument. At first they had under-estimated their opponents, now they went to the other extreme, and over-estimated them. The enemy's numbers alone terrified them. This superstition, and a certain feeling of impotence in the face of the Russians, have proved too much for the courage of the Austrian Army.

The Staff lived together on good terms in the castle at Posen. Common cares and common glory united us. We got into the habit of sitting together for a time after dinner. We used to sit

at a round table on which stood a palm, the gift of H.M. our Kaiserin, a true German woman, of whom I always think with the greatest admiration.

This short hour was a great relaxation to me in the midst of the almost crushing work of those four months of war.

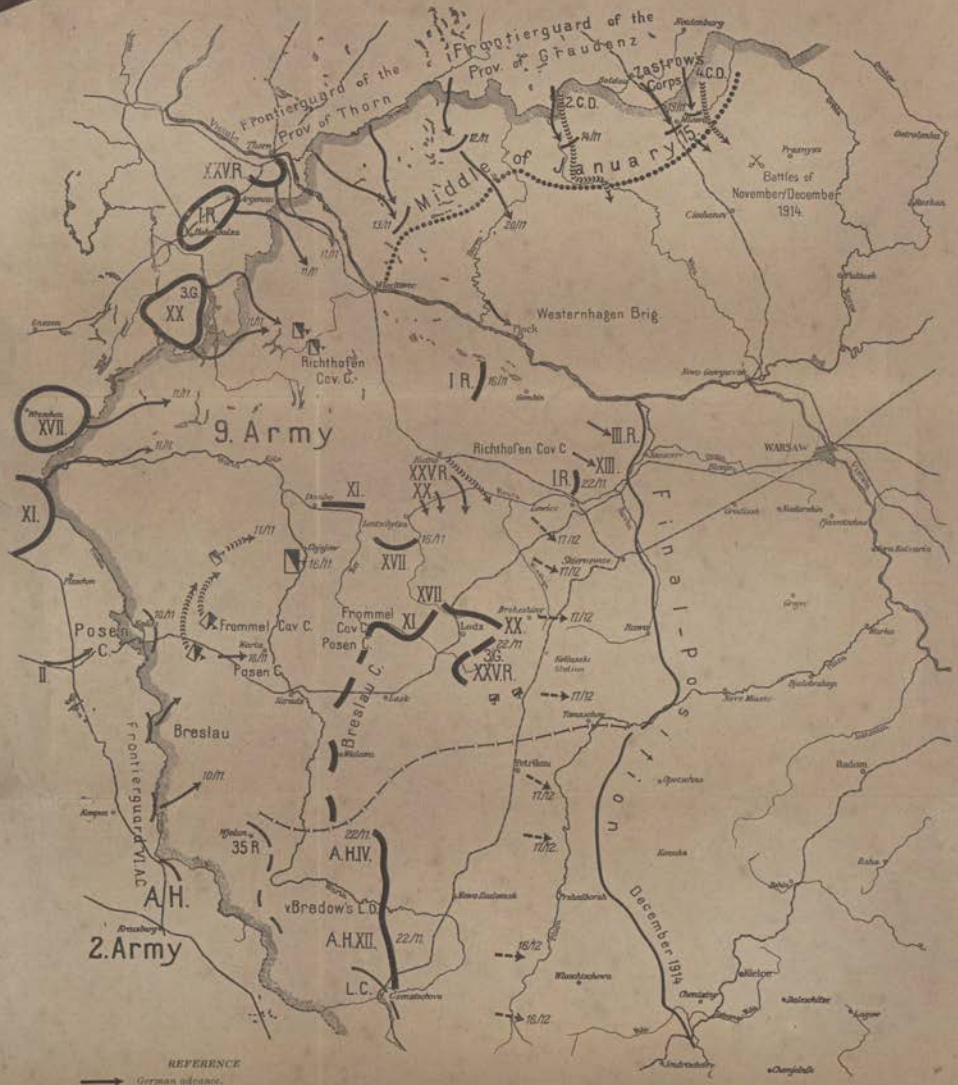
A great battle had been fought and won. New problems were ahead of us. Germany and Austria-Hungary had been saved from the Russian danger. All the Grand Duke's plans were shattered. His attack on the East Prussian frontier, his advance on the west bank of the Vistula, and, with this, all the Entente's hope of a victorious finish of the war in the year 1914 had fallen to the ground. The surrender of the eastern portion of East Prussia and of a large part of Galicia, hard as it was, was of no consequence compared with these results.

The second part of the campaign in Poland was, also, an achievement. There is little in military history that can compare with it.

Our troops, which had been constantly fighting or on the move since the beginning of August, had shown themselves beyond all praise. Once more they had been victorious against an enemy with nearly twice their numbers. It was only with such leaders and such men that it proved actually possible for us to translate bold plans into action against such superior forces.

Honour and perpetual remembrance to the German Army of 1914!

THE CAMPAIGN IN NORTH POLAND, AUTUMN, 1914



THE WINTER BATTLE IN MASURIA. FEBRUARY TO MARCH, 1915.

(MAP V.)

I

THE 1914 campaign had not brought a decision, and I could not see how one was to be reached in 1915. At the end of the year, four new Army Corps were formed which were to be ready in February. The experience with the new formations of the autumn, 1914, had taught us our lesson. These corps were stronger than the earlier formations, in that each company had a percentage of war-hardened and particularly able officers, N.C.O.'s and men. The higher positions also were well filled. Naturally, I wished the four corps to be under the Eastern command, in order further to maintain our pressure on the Russians and break down their resistance as far as our strength made that possible. We were planning a new hammer-blow in West Prussia. Such a blow would also have been of strategical value in the Carpathians if the Hungarian railways had been better developed in days of peace.

By the end of the year the Austro-Hungarian General Staff were already afraid that Przemysl would fall in the spring, and anticipated an invasion of Hungary by strong hostile forces.

The Russians had in the meantime continued their attacks on General Boroevic's army, and won the crest of the Carpathians. General von Conrad now wanted to undertake a counter-attack himself on a large scale, and relieve Przemysl at the same time.

I considered the reinforcement of the Austrian Army in the

Carpathians necessary, in view of its internal condition; all the more so, if the Russian Army could not be attacked vigorously at some other point. Whether it would be possible to do this in East Prussia was still questionable; it was not yet known whether those four new corps were to be placed at our disposal.

I was accordingly obliged to support the suggestion that German forces should be sent to Hungary, even though they were taken from the forces at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief in the East. The 9th Army in Poland was packed very tight. Positions were being prepared. The war in the West had taught us that on the defensive, in a war of positions, considerably longer fronts could be allowed than had up to now been thought possible. A number of divisions could be withdrawn from the 9th Army for use elsewhere. The idea of continuing the frontal attacks here or south of the river Pilica, which had been suggested from one quarter, I rejected.

The following units were released for the Hungarian Front: The Headquarters Staff of the 2nd A.C., the 1st Inf. Div., 48th Res. Div., as well as a special brigade of three regiments, out of which a Guard Division was formed later, and the 5th Cavalry Division At the same time, still further reserves were withdrawn for disposal by the Commander-in-Chief in the East. If it were possible to carry out the offensive proposed by General von Conrad, with the help of the reinforcements in view, it would be better than mere defence.

General von Conrad, on his side, decided to reduce the number of troops on the Serbian Front, as far as conditions would allow, and send all available forces to the Carpathians. He proposed to deliver the main attack on Przemysl with the bulk of his forces between the Uszok and Dukla Passes. East of that point, the German troops, reinforced by Austrian formations, and styled the German Southern Army, under the command of General von Linsingen, a particularly far-seeing and zealous leader, were to follow the advance of the main forces on Przemysl as right flank echelon.

The German Southern Army was too weak to make an encircling movement possible, as that would necessarily have involved an

extension far out to the Bukovina. Moreover the railway system was not sufficient to carry out such a plan.

While these operations were being discussed I was surprised by a telegram from our General Headquarters, stating that I had been made Chief of Staff of the Southern Army.

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg did not want to part with me. He wrote fully to H.M. the Kaiser, asking to be allowed to retain me, and in the position I had hitherto held.

Meanwhile, as once before at Insterburg, I said good-bye to the members of the Staff, and entered on my new duties, convinced that I should shortly return.

On the journey through the Carpathians I had an interview in Breslau with Generals von Conrad and von Falkenhayn, when the details of the deployment and the operations were settled. In particular, the equipment of the troops was discussed. General von Conrad considered that mountain equipment was not necessary. But when, later, I paid a visit to the concentration area, I was thoroughly convinced of the absolute necessity of such an equipment and lost not a moment in securing some.

We were warmly welcomed by the population of Hungary, as indeed later when we freed Transylvania. But once we had done our duty, their gratitude soon waned. All sorts of things occurred that made life uncomfortable for our troops. The Magyars are a strong and masterful people, but they lacked understanding of the common interests of Austria-Hungary and the just wishes and needs of the numerous nationalities living in Hungary. Hungary was the stronger half of the Dual Monarchy, and misused her position to further a disastrous foreign policy on the part of the Empire against Serbia and Rumania. Unfortunately we made no protest.

The Headquarters of the Staff of the Southern Army was at Munkacs. General von Linsingen and I travelled from there through the concentration area, and settled the question of its relations to the neighbouring Commands and the Austrian troops, who were already in position in the mountains, and were to join up with the Southern Army.

The troops were insufficiently provided for, not only as regards the preparation of positions, but also shelter. Much had to be made good.

On a walk through the wooded hills, I once came across a sentry. He gave me a message in some, I forget which, foreign language. Even the Austrian officers who accompanied me could not understand him. From this incident I gained some idea of the difficulties with which this army had to contend. These difficulties were aggravated by the fact that nationalities were much mixed in the regiments, in order to make them more reliable. Czech and Rumanian regiments had gone over to the enemy. Men of these nationalities were now distributed among many regiments.

But these measures did no good. They lowered the inherent value of the brave Hungarian, and particularly good German regiments, and aggravated the language difficulty to an extraordinary degree.

Once more, as at the time of my journey to Neu-Sandec, in September, 1914, I gained an impression of the complete lack of development of all the races which did not belong to the ruling nationalities. One of my journeys took me to the villages of Huzules. I shall never forget the poor housing conditions of this unhappy people. How different were things in Germany, thanks to the wise measures of her Princes, and how high *Kultur* and progress stood among us as compared with Austria-Hungary. When I saw those huts in Huzules, I realized that this nation could not know what it was fighting for.

Austria-Hungary had been very negligent. As an allied Power we should have known how to prevent it. Had the Dual Monarchy and the Austro-Hungarian Army accomplished even half of what could properly have been expected of them, German troops need not have been brought in such masses to reinforce their fronts. In the long run we should have had more troops at our disposal for the Western Front.

I admit that Austria-Hungary complained that we had failed in France in the autumn of 1914, and that they had been exposed single-handed to Russia's overwhelming numbers.

In any case, it was fatal for us that we were allied with decaying states like Austria–Hungary and Turkey. A Jew in Radom once said to one of my officers that he could not understand why so strong and vital a body as Germany should ally itself with a corpse. He was right.

But Germany was not to obtain any vigorous battle allies. We even neglected to infuse any new life into our perishing allies. I only got to know the condition of affairs in Austria–Hungary in the course of the war. I had never had any opportunity previously. I was utterly amazed. Our responsible authorities had realized that the Dual Monarchy had become the " Sick Man of Europe," but failed to draw the correct conclusions from it. We should have kept faith with her and led her, instead of binding ourselves to her and seconding her strong but one-sided policy.

My stay in Munkacs was not of long duration. At the end of January I was again in Posen in my old position. I had had an exciting time, and found that I had missed nothing of importance.

II

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief in the East had been advised by General Headquarters that during the first half of February three new corps and the 21st A.C. could be placed at his disposal for the Eastern theatre of war. General Headquarters had considered that the replacement of the 21st Corps by a new corps was necessary, in view of the fact that its reserves consisted of men from Alsace–Lorraine. The unreliability displayed by some of the troops from the Reichsland on the West Front increased as the war went on. They were, therefore, generally sent to the East. Of course, this meant that many loyal Alsace–Lorraine subjects had to suffer, but it was not possible to do justice to each individual. For the 1918 offensive in France all the younger classes were withdrawn from the Army in the East. This applied also to the corresponding classes of Alsace–Lorraine troops, and gave rise to complaints

from some of the men. On the Eastern Front the Alsace–Lorraine troops fought excellently, and the 21st Corps even with distinction.

It had been arranged with General Headquarters that as soon as the four corps were detrained, they should be concentrated for a blow at the Russian forces facing the 8th Army. The experience of Tannenberg and the Battle of the Masurian Lakes had shown us that a great and rapid success in battle was only to be obtained when the enemy was attacked on two sides. We now had the possibility of carrying out two enveloping movements, one from the Tilsit–Wladislzwow–Kalvarya direction, with a strong group of three corps (which were to be assembled between the Niemen and the road from Insterburg to Gumbinnen), and another with the 40th R.C., to which the 2nd Inf. Div. and the 4th Cav. Div. were attached, between Lake Spirding and the frontier from the direction of Bialla–Raigrod–Augustowo and the south. Simultaneously, the enemy was to be pinned down by a frontal attack.

Both our opponent's wings were weak. We could hope to gain a lot of ground before the enemy main forces could get away from our frontal attack. Both our thrusting wings were to surround the enemy—the earlier the better.

If we succeeded in annihilating the enemy, it might be possible whilst guarding our flank against any move from the Kovno–Grodno direction, to attack the Osowiec–Grodno line, and take the Bobr crossing near Osowiec from the rear. This presupposed that the long flank stretching through Wloclawek, Mlawa and Johannisburg to Osowiec held firm.

The result would be even more favourable for us if, simultaneously with the offensive on the Eastern frontier of East Prussia, a move could be made from the Wloclawek Johannisburg line, and we could gain ground towards the Narew, and attack Osowiec. I tried to realize this plan, because in this case we would forestall the Russians all along the line. It remained to be seen whether, later on, we should be able to take the Russian main forces west of the Vistula in the rear.

A leader must weigh up all such possibilities, otherwise he

would live from hand to mouth, and thus endanger the conduct of the campaign and the safety of the troops. Grim reality takes care that plans do not go beyond what troops can accomplish in the way of overcoming the enemy's resistance.

The measures which I took as a result of this course of reasoning completely upset the enemy's calculations, which had become known. The Entente hoped to win the war in 1915 through Russia. While the Grand Duke intended an offensive in full force in the Carpathians, strong Russian forces were, according to the so-called " gigantic plan," to be sent forward between the Niemen and the Gumbinnen–Insterburg road against the weak north wing of the 8th Army, crush it in, envelop the army, and throw it back to the Vistula. Other troops, especially masses of cavalry, were to break through our weak forces between Mlawa and the Vistula, and invade West Prussia. The stretch of Prussian territory east of the Vistula was to be overrun, and the German troops which occupied it were to be annihilated.

In January a reinforcement of the enemy's front opposite the left wing of the 8th Army was perceptible. It is very probable that the advance of the Russians towards the Wloclawek–Mlawa line east of the Vistula in December, 1914, had been made with this intention. The completion of the one operation was here, as in the Carpathians, the introduction to another.

The execution of the " gigantic plan " was still only in its first stages ; but the Russians had already fixed their eyes firmly on the country east of the Vistula. As early as the beginning of January they had taken away troops from their front west of the Vistula in order to use them in the north. If we forestalled their plans by our own, we should certainly have to reckon with strong counter-attacks across both the Niemen and the Narew. These counter-attacks were actually made, and indeed with such force and continuity that we had a very hard time of it. The Grand Duke was a really great soldier and strategist.

Flank protection on the Kovno–Olita side, on the one hand, and the Osowiec–Lomza side on the other, was to be secured mainly by those units of the 8th Army which would become

available owing to the shortening of the front. This would result from the enveloping movements to be carried out by both wings in the direction of Grodno.

At the beginning of February, while the four corps were being deployed, the 20th A.C. of the 9th Army was sent to the neighbourhood south-east of Ortelsburg to reinforce the southern front. It was ready to move on Lomza and Myschinjetz also. Next, the 1st R.C. and the 6th Cav. Div. were sent to Willenberg, the 3rd Inf. Div. to Neidenburg, and the 1st Guard Res. Div. from General Woyrsch's Army Detachment to the neighbourhood of Soldau. The deployment of these troops would be complete by about the 20th of February. They had been moved very late intentionally. We feared that the withdrawal of troops on such a large scale from occupied Poland could not be kept secret, and might disclose our plan for an offensive in East Prussia. I attached the utmost importance to secrecy for the success of our operations. Later on some more divisions were withdrawn from the front west of the Vistula, a move which was made possible by the fact that the enemy, too, was weakening his front there. These troop movements were a complicated game that required our closest attention.

Now that all this is past, a natural question suggests itself. Was it wise to send German troops to the Carpathians? Undoubtedly they were badly missed in our winter campaign east of the Vistula, where their rightful place was. But they were needed still more in the Carpathians, owing to the immediate condition of the Austrian Army, which required stiffening. I should, however, have found it considerably more difficult to recommend the sending of reinforcements had I at the time realized that we would be given the four army corps.

I am unable to judge whether or not our General Headquarters was at this juncture in a position to release more troops from the West for the East, as they actually did in April. Naturally, every addition to our forces in the East would have been welcome. But the great decision to stake everything against Russia was not taken until a later date.

III

In the meantime local fighting had continued in the Polish salient of the Vistula. It was doubtful how far this engaged the attention of the Russians. On the whole, one cannot expect any great advantage from such diversions as long as the enemy's troops are to be relied upon and remain steadfast. They only become of importance when the command feels it is losing its grip of affairs as the result of unfavourable events. As soon, however, as demonstrations develop into tactical actions which may produce fairly important local successes, matters assume quite a different aspect.

In order to make the Russians believe that our offensive was to continue, the 9th Army was to attack in full force in the neighbourhood of Balimow at the end of January. For this purpose our General Headquarters placed eighteen thousand rounds of gas shells at our disposal. It is characteristic of our ideas at that time that this amount of ammunition was considered something quite exceptional. In the East we were never short of ammunition. We always had as much as was possible for the supply services to bring up on the bad roads during open warfare, and in trench warfare no great dumps were made in those days. In the West, however, conditions were different —ammunition was very short there indeed. None of the warring nations had estimated correctly either the effects of concentrated artillery fire, or the consumption of ammunition.

When I was Director of the Operations Department before the war, I continually pointed out the necessity of increasing our ammunition supplies in peace to such an output that it would last until deliveries were forthcoming under war-contracts. I was unsuccessful in getting even anywhere near the required amount ; but even if my proposals had been adopted, there would have been a shortage, because the rate of consumption was too enormous. But we should, at any rate, have been able to overcome the crisis sooner, and perhaps got well ahead

with our output instead of always remaining behind the demand Lieut.-Colonel Bauer had, as early as the autumn of 1914, done, his best to speed up supplies.

The 9th Army's attack near Bolimow took place on January 31st. The weather was too cold for a gas attack, though that as yet we did not realize. Other things, too, did not turn out as we could have wished. We took a few thousand prisoners, but otherwise, from a tactical point of view, our success was small. All the same, our attack made a great impression on the Russians, and strategically our hopes were realized.

The deployment of the four corps detailed to make the attack started at the beginning of February and went off smoothly. On the 6th of February it was completed. We moved our Headquarters to Insterburg. We did not find it easy to say good-bye to Posen, where we had passed through great and eventful times. But Insterburg called up pleasant memories of the events of September, 1914.

For these operations the 10th Army Headquarters, General von Eichhorn, with Colonel Hell as his Chief of Staff, was placed under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief in the East. There would have been too many units for the 8th Army Headquarters to manage alone. I was very pleased with this new arrangement, for it is easier to operate with two army staffs than with one. I had learnt this from my campaign in Poland.

The 10th Army was placed north of the 8th, and the boundary of their respective areas ran approximately through Darkehmen. The enveloping group of the 10th Army—the 21st A.C., 39th, 38th R.C. (from right to left)—had taken up positions between Ragnit and the big forests north-east of Insterburg, and were covered by the 1st Cav. Div. and the 5th Guard Infantry Brigade as well as by the main reserve, now the Konigsberg Landwehr Division, on the great Insterburg road. Then followed, on a line to Lake Spirding, the 3rd Res. Div., 3rd Landwehr Div., with a heavy leaven of Landsturm, and the 5th Infantry Brigade.

The attacking group of the 8th Army, under General von Litzmann, was placed as follows: the 2nd Inf. Div. west of

Johannisburg, the 40th Reserve Corps south of it, as far as the frontier, and following it, the 4th Cavalry Division. Landsturm formations lined the frontier. The 20th A.C. was completing its detraining behind the right wing of the 8th Army, near Ortelsburg. This corps had come from the 9th Army, and was to move forward behind General Litzmann's attacking wing, to Lomza, and then feel its way past Myschinjetz towards the river Narew. The withdrawal of the other troops and their transfer to the Mlawa direction was in full swing. General von Gallwitz was to take over the command between the Vistula and the Orshitz, and push south as soon as he had concentrated his forces. It remained to be seen how far the German troops who were advancing into north Poland would be able to get, An offensive here would be the best way of helping the operation by the 10th and 8th Armies and forestalling any counter-attacks by the enemy.

The "Winter Battle" was inaugurated on the 7th of February, on which day General von Litzmann initiated operations. The rest of the 8th Army and the 10th Army were not to advance and open their attack before the 8th of February. Only the barest outlines of the operations could be given by orders; the rest had to be left to the judgment of the Army Commands. But the same tactical views were shared by all, so success was assured everywhere. Even during the battle itself the Commander-in-Chief in the East had but few dispositions to make. I had to be thinking of the next move and the covering of the flanks.

I did not find it easy to start the Army off on its task. The winter was cold. An exceptionally fierce snowstorm had been raging since the 4th or 5th of February; roads and railways were buried, and it was difficult to get ahead off the beaten track. Snow-drifts, as high as a man, were succeeded by bare places covered with thin ice. However, no alteration was made in the original scheme. The Russians had even greater difficulties to contend with, because their supply trains had been sent on ahead.

Our troops were equipped for a winter campaign, and the

transport had been put on runners, though these proved later to be unpractical, for they could not be used on roads which were only covered with snow in places.

The feats performed by man and horse during the following days are beyond description, and for ever redound to their honour. The heads of the marching columns worked their way laboriously through the snow-drifts. Wagons got stuck in the snow. The columns stopped and got longer and longer. The infantry edged their way past the wagons and guns, and tried to catch up with those in front. Ten to twelve horses were harnessed to guns and ammunition wagons. So the roads were gradually covered with long marching columns, infantry pushing ahead, interspersed with only a few guns and still fewer ammunition wagons. For the night or when fighting was taking place the columns closed up a little. After a few days the weather changed. The roads became impassable. Great pools of water covered the frozen ground off the roads and the surface of the marshes. It was lucky that by our wide encircling movement we captured provisions from the enemy's provision columns, for otherwise the whole operation would have had to be broken off through failure of supply.

The commands and the subordinate staffs had to face extraordinary difficulties. It was a long time before battle-worthy units could be brought up when an engagement with the enemy took place. Orders could not be transmitted, wires were broken down by the storm, messages did not arrive. And yet the most wonderful things were accomplished.

The operation, like most operations, did not pass without friction, which prejudiced the strategical unity.

General Litzmann's troops made good progress on the 7th. They got as far as Johannisburg and further south crossed the Pissa. On the 8th they took Johannisburg, and during the following days, their flank secured against any enemy movement from Osowiec, they pressed forward to Raigrod, where they met with strong opposition. An enemy attack from the direction of Osowiec was met and repulsed. At the same time the centre of the 8th Army, following close on the heels of the enemy

who were giving way along the whole front, was approaching Lyck.

Both leaders and troops spared no effort to accelerate the advance, but progress was too slow for the strategic combination as a whole. Lyck, which was splendidly defended by the 3rd Siberian Corps, only fell on the morning of the 14th. This corps escaped annihilation and withdrew via Augustowo behind the marshes of the upper Bobr.

After the fall of Lyck progress was rapid. By the night of the 16th–17th General Litzmann was in Augustowo after further heavy fighting. I now endeavoured to push forward the right wing of the 8th Army from Raigrod due east via Taino (south of Augustowo) to Schtabin, Krasnybor and the Bobr, so as to come in on the flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps once more. But the 8th Army did not consider this to be practicable, owing to the condition of the roads.

Very early in the operations, whilst our columns were still marching on Augustowo, the 3rd Res. Div., the 5th Infantry Brigade and the 11th Landw. Div. had gradually been withdrawn from this battle front and pushed forward for the protection of the armies against attacks from the Osowiec–Lomza line. Osowiec was to be invested and stormed. It was now certain that strong forces were gathering in the neighbourhood of Lomza, and the portion of the 20th A.C. stationed there was no longer sufficient.

In the meantime the enveloping movement of the 10th Army had been completed. By the night of the 10th–11th, after extraordinary forced marches and incredible efforts, the centre of this army, moving on the Tilsit-Kalwaria line, had reached the Insterburg–Kovno road near Wirballen, and when Lyck fell on the 14th the infantry columns were already due north of the great Augustowo Forest near Suwalki–Seiny.

The retreating Russian Army was attacked vigorously in the flank and forced southwards. They were apparently taken by surprise again, just as at the beginning of our offensive from Upper Silesia and Hohensalza. In this connection our intelligence service did good work by spreading false rumours and preventing the enemy from obtaining information. The Russians

and the Entente did not succeed in getting news of these movements. It is, indeed, extremely difficult to obtain accurate information about the enemy, especially in time for it to be of any use. If it were otherwise, conducting a campaign with inferior numbers would not be such an extraordinarily difficult task. We were favoured by luck at Tannenberg.

Some parts of the Russian Army which had retired towards Kovno thus stood on our flank, and attacked us incessantly with a view to holding up our advance. It was in vain. They were thrown back on the Kovno–Olita line by the troops protecting the flank of the 10th Army.

On the evening of the 14th it seemed as though it would be possible to complete the envelopment of the enemy due east of Augustowo. General von Eichhorn diverted his left wing in this direction. On the 15th and 16th the advance guard of the 21st A.C. advanced on the Seiny–Augustowo *chaussée*, far into the forest, but here they were overrun by Russian columns pouring back eastwards, and part was taken prisoner. Up to February 18th forces of the 10th Army pushed on boldly along the northern edge of the forest to the vicinity of Grodno. Here they took up a position facing west with their rear close to the fortifications. This bold and venturesome movement cut off the enemy's retreat. Other German troops penetrated the forest from the north, and after the capture of Augustowo reached the Grodno Lipsk *chaussée* and the Bobr below Krasnybor, fighting all the way. At Lipsk the ring was closed.

The position of our troops before Grodno was exceedingly hazardous. On the 20th and 21st violent attacks were made from the fortress where the Russian reinforcements had assembled. The Russians made repeated attacks from the Augustowo Forest, into which they had poured in their retreat. The German troops stood firm, though suffering heavy losses.

It was a brilliant piece of work for the 21st A.C., and its leader, General Fritz von Below, who afterwards made good as an Army Commander in the West, had reason to be proud of his troops and his own forcefulness. The Staff of the 10th Army could claim a share of the glory with good conscience.

A few days later the masses of Russian troops surging in the Augustowo Forest and defending themselves desperately, surrendered. The battle was at an end.

IV

The tactical results of the winter campaign in Masuria were important: 110,000 prisoners and many hundred guns. The Russian 10th Army had been annihilated, and Russia's strength was once more perceptibly reduced.

The original plan of operations had comprised an attack on Osowiec with the help of the heaviest possible direct fire. Of that part of the attacking armies which had reached the upper Bobr south of Augustowo, during the fighting in the forest, the 38th and 40th R.C., the 2nd Inf. Div. and the 4th Cav. Div. were to have crossed the river. Before they could do so, however, they had become partly involved in that tremendous fight in the forest which preceded the destruction of the 10th Russian Army.

I had awaited the end of this fighting with increasing suspense. The section of the 8th Army which had been employed here—the Litzmann group—joined the 10th Army. The 8th Army received instructions to effect the attack on Osowiec from Grajewo and take over the defence of East Prussia against Russian attacks from that point to the Orshitz.

Our troops did not succeed in getting through the marshes of the upper Bobr in spite of repeated and obstinate attempts. We wanted frost, but heavy rain continued to fall without ceasing. It was hardly possible to remain in the forest and marsh district. The upper Bobr could only be crossed by the existing causeways. The bridges had been destroyed. The 3rd Siberian Corps which had escaped at Lyck offered a brave resistance, and the desperate stand of the Russians in the Augustowo Forest had given them time to strengthen the defences of the Grodno–Osowiec sector.

Our troops were worn out by the bad weather and the strain

of the operations. They reported that the Russians were stationed south of the channel in concrete positions. That seemed quite possible, although we were very sceptical. Subsequently, in the year 1916, Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann inspected the Russian positions, but saw no concrete works. The wearier attacking troops are, the stronger does the position to be attacked appear to them, and they give the enemy credit for strength he does not possess. This is a very human trait. It did not have any influence on the decisions we came to, for the young contingents were undoubtedly exhausted and this necessitated fresh measures.

Meanwhile the attack on Osowiec had not made any headway either. In spite of our powerful artillery it defied frontal attack, as the commanding heights on the southern bank of the Bobr could not be reached at all points.

Under these circumstances I could not conceal from myself that this great victory had been deprived of its full strategical results. Army Headquarters were called on to make grave and difficult decisions.

In the first place the order was given to discontinue the attacks on the Bobr and Osowiec.

The 10th Army could not remain where it was. Very strong forces were needed to protect our flanks on the east, the Olita–Kovno direction, but they were not available. Communication with the rear and the conditions under which the army was living had become too difficult owing to the inclemency of the weather. They could not be borne for long. The broad gauge railway built by the Russians from Marggrabowa via Ratschki to Suwalki could do little to ameliorate this state of affairs. The roads and tracks were too bad, the weather too unfavourable and the horses too exhausted. Our transport could hardly get on at all on the high roads with their thin surface of worn stones. Besides, we had very little available. The army had to return to conditions under which it could live and recuperate. All this made it urgently necessary that the 10th Army should face about and withdraw.

At the very beginning of the operations orders had been given

for the construction of rear positions east of Augustowo–Suwalki reaching as far as the Niemen. The work was immediately put in hand by Labour Companies as soon as we had conquered this district. These positions—although only in an early stage —now offered a certain amount of support. The 10th Army received orders for its right wing to wheel and retire to the prepared line. It was left to that army itself to carry out the details of the movement and also decide whether the left wing should withdraw the same distance or only as far as the Kalwarija–Pilwischki line. It was to be presumed that the enemy would press closely after them.

At the same time the 10th Army had received instructions to release forces which were urgently required further west. The great Russian counter attacks had begun against our long flank on the southern frontier of West and East Prussia. Further the Russians were keeping us busy to the north of the Niemen. The battle raged all round German territory east of the Vistula.

Quiet reigned in the Polish bend of the Vistula.

The Austrian Army's offensive for the relief of Przemysl had been unsuccessful. The Russians very soon made counter-attacks. Przemysl would have to be left to its fate. On the whole Eastern front we were now faced by the prospect of heavy Russian attacks.

V

After the Augustowo Forest had been cleared and the wounded removed, at the beginning of March, General von Eichhorn, in accordance with instructions, withdrew his right to the defensive line, and his left north of the Augustowo Forest as far as Seiny and south of Kalwarija. He proposed to fall on the pursuing Russians again and defeat them by enveloping their right wing.

The idea was a good one and in accordance with the resolute spirit prevailing at Army Headquarters. The days from the 9th to the 11th of March witnessed a fresh success, for the newly-

formed 10th Russian Army suffered defeat. But the troops needed rest so much and the weather was so bad that the Army Command had reluctantly to decide to give up any idea of further attacks and have recourse to position warfare, especially as more troops had to be transferred to the 8th Army and Gallwitz's detachment. The left wing remained in the neighbourhood of Kalwarija–Mariampol–Pilwischki. About the middle of March the Russians hurled themselves against these positions, but a period of quiet gradually set in.

The Russian attacks on the southern front became more and more determined and the fighting more and more violent. During General Litzmann's advance from Johannisburg through Bialla in the early days of the winter battle, the 20th A.C. and the 41st Inf. Div., with some Landsturm, had pushed forward on the Johannisburg–Kovno road towards Lomaz so as to cut this fortress off from the north. The 37th Inf. Div. were pressing forward via Myschinjetz. The 41st Inf. Div. encountered the enemy in front of the fortifications of Lomza, and was just strong enough to isolate the sector between the Pissa and the Scszuszin–Stawiski–Lomza road.

The 3rd Res. Div. and the 5th Infantry Brigade only came up by degrees. They were to cover the long sector between Stawiski and the Bobr, whilst the 11th Landwehr Division began the attack on Osowiec. The arrival of the 3rd Res. Div. and the 5th Infantry Brigade coincided with an attack from Lomza by the Russian Guard and the 5th A.C. From the 21st February onwards, heavy fighting developed to the north of the fortresses. The German troops fought heroically, but the crisis was grave.

One morning the Chief of Staff of the 8th Army reported to me that the line of the 3rd Res. Div. had been pierced. However, they managed to recover and hold fast, as the Russians relaxed their efforts. For a long time their situation and, of course, that of the force besieging Osowiec, were very critical. It was not until the arrival of the 1st Landwehr Div. before Lomza early in March that our front was so strongly held that I was able to regard all danger east of the Pissa as past.

The steadfastness of the troops, and especially the 3rd Res. Div., had resulted in a brilliant defensive victory. General von Scholtz took over command of this sector, and his sphere of command was subsequently extended as far as the Schkwa. General von Scholtz had already held commands at the Battle of Tannenberg and in Poland with great distinction. He was considerably senior in the service to the Commander of the 8th Army, General Otto von Below, but the General readily took service under his younger comrade.

Between the Pissa and the Orshitz General von Staabs, with his 37th Inf. Div. and the Landsturm stationed there, had gained ground in the direction of the Narew. Before long the Russians were considerably reinforced here. They attacked incessantly from Nowogrod, and, especially with the 4th Siberian Corps, from Ostrolenka. The fighting became increasingly severe, and more and more of the troops who had taken part in the winter battle had to be transferred to this point. By degrees there arrived from the 10th Army the 2nd Inf. Div., the 75th Res. Div., the 10th Landwehr Div. and the 4th Cav. Div. But in the end even these were not enough. The 76th Res. Div. from the 10th Army was sent there also after being transferred for a time to the west of the Orshitz, under General von Gallwitz.

Owing to the character of the country, with its great stretches of marsh intersected by patches of forest and narrow defiles covered with scraggy pines, the fighting here was broken up into local actions. It placed heavy responsibility on the subordinate commands and officers of lower rank. Man fought with man. Though these local crises seemed interminable and the fighting dragged on into April, we were still over the frontier when it came to an end.

After the middle of February fighting was in full swing west of the Orshitz also. General von Gallwitz, an enterprising and resourceful soldier, and a man with a variety of interests in every sphere of life, was one of the best leaders in our army. He strengthened the weak front to the west of Mlawa, and in the middle of February pushed forward here up the Vistula as

far as Plock. Here once more we forestalled the Russian plans and made a thrust into their area of concentration.

Meanwhile, the German reinforcements had taken up their positions on the Neidenburg–Willenberg front, the left wing of Gallwitz's detachment. The situation seemed to promise that a fresh attack in the direction of Prasnysz would dislodge the enemy troops facing the 17th R.C. A general advance of Gallwitz's detachment to the line of the Narew would then be possible. At that time this seemed important strategically. The attack against Osowiec and the Upper Bobr was still in progress. Every local success achieved by General von Gallwitz improved the general position and our prospects for further engagements. We were in a state of great tension.

General von Gallwitz attacked on February 22nd, in the direction of Prasnysz, with portions of the 17th R.C., the 1st R.C. and the 3rd Inf. Div. General von Morgen stormed this very strongly fortified town on the 24th. The situation was everywhere favourable when it was reported that strong Russian forces were advancing between the Ciechanov–Mlawa road and the Orshitz, and had already outflanked General von Morgen. Reconnoitring by means of aeroplanes was not possible in those days, and we were very poorly equipped as regards flying squadrons. Our cavalry patrols could not get through, and finally infantry outposts were in contact everywhere. On February 27th, in face of the attack by the Siberian Corps, Prasnysz had to be abandoned with very heavy losses on our side. General von Morgen retreated towards the Janow–Chorshele line, at the frontier. The Russians did not press on so hard to the north, but their attacks towards Mlawa were extremely vigorous.

The local commanders proposed to hold the frontier position in course of construction to the south of Neidenburg–Willenberg, but I made the 1st Reserve Corps stand further south. Here, also, the fighting became very violent.

Up to March 7th the Russians attacked incessantly between Mlawa and Chorshele, and suffered very heavy losses, but in vain.

At this time there was fighting on the whole of the eastern and southern front of East and West Prussia. The 10th Army had completed its withdrawal, wheeled, and was now beginning its counter-attack north of the Augustowo Forest. Near Lomza the crisis was at an end, but no conclusion had yet been reached between the Pissa and Mlawa. Every day I had to make innumerable tactical and other decisions. The commanders on the southern front were appealing continuously for reinforcements, but the 10th Army still thought it could bring off a success, even if only a local one, and was therefore reluctant to part with troops.

In the meantime further reinforcements from the 10th Army had reached General von Gallwitz and the right wing of the 8th Army. We were now strong enough to make a counter-attack on both sides of the Orshitz against the enemy, who had been weakened during the last few days by heavy losses.

Our advance took place from the 8th to the 12th of March, and ceased north of Prasnysz. The Russians replied with heavy counter-attacks. On March 18th they taught our troops near Jednoroshetz that swamps are no sure protection against the enemy. Our soldiers connected the idea of swamps with the idea of being swallowed up, but the Russians, as children of Nature, knew better. The swamps in the region of the fighting were only frozen in places. In others they were not deep, and covered a firm, non-porous bed, so it was possible to wade through them.

At the end of March the fighting to the west of the Orshitz died down. Here it was possible to withdraw the 76th R.D. and transfer them to the east of the river. We were also able to release the 6th Cav. Div. west of the Orshitz; they were urgently needed north of the Pregel.

Gallwitz's detachment had achieved great successes, and this officer also was justified in being proud of his troops. They had defended themselves against an enormous numerical superiority and even forced the enemy back.

From the end of March and beginning of April onwards the

troops on the whole of the southern front could at last enjoy the rest they longed for.

The engagements from Lomza to Mlawa are not so well known. In the East Germany only thought of big successes. It was no longer possible to achieve these by such obvious means. The Grand Duke's great counter-move against the victory of the winter, the attack on the Narew against our weak flank, and also part of the Entente's plan of campaign for the year 1915, had all been frustrated. The troops, both collectively and individually, had fought in a manner worthy of the great achievements of the past. Old and new formations had vied with one another in battle. There was more staying power in the old formations. The Landwehr and Landsturm forces had done valuable work. The command was fully competent for its task and the campaign of the past winter had been a splendid military achievement.

VI

Apart from the big decisive actions, engagements had been taking place north of the Pregel since the middle of February. On both sides they were only conducted by Landsturm and Landwehr troops, and had no strategic importance, but they kept us occupied and always on the alert.

At the beginning of February the Russians were still on Prussian territory north-east of Tilsit, and we were justified in our desire to wrest this last small corner of German soil from the power of the enemy. The task was entrusted to the Governor of Königsberg, General von Pappritz, with the Landsturm forces stationed there, reinforced by some artillery. Tauroggen was seized on February 18th.

The name Tauroggen is bound up with great historical memories, and it was a misfortune for the two States, now at war, that they forsook that road of Russo-German friendship which Tauroggen symbolizes.

The peace which reigned once more north of the Pregel was rudely broken on the 17th of March by an inroad near Memel

and Tauroggen of a Russian force composed of home-defence and frontier-guard formations. They took us by surprise whilst we were still devoting all our attention to events elsewhere.

It is true that there had been rumours of the concentration of enemy forces on the Russian side of the frontier near Memel. But there had been so many rumours, and hitherto they had not materialized. Moreover, there was no reason whatever to expect a Russian attempt in that neighbourhood.

The Russian horde advanced on Memel, which the Landsturm forces abandoned. We heard of this through a telephone girl, who rang us up and gave us this news when the Russians were actually in the Post Office.

I endeavoured to obtain the Iron Cross of the Second Class for this young girl, Fräulein Erica Röstel. This was not possible, but she afterwards received a gold watch from the State.

The Russians took Tauroggen at the same time and pushed on in the direction of Tilsit. The actions on the other fronts had used up the reserves. The G.O.C. of the 2nd A.C. district had now to send an *Ersatz* battalion to replace them from Stettin, a proof of how freely we had spent ourselves, and how severely our strength had been taxed by the engagements which had taken place since the beginning of February.

On March 21st Memel was freed, and on the 22nd three thousand people who had been carried off were recovered from the enemy. The Russians had wrought incredible havoc. Tauroggen fell on March 29th. The 6th Cav. Div. were transferred to that district and from that time guarded it from the Lithuanian side of the frontier.

East Prussia was once more free, and henceforth was spared any further enemy invasion. It was now possible to begin the work of reconstruction.

Since the middle of February our Headquarters had been at Lötzen. These were hard days for me until the beginning of April. I had to abandon the hopes I had entertained of making immediate strategical use of the advantages gained by the winter battle. Tactically this battle had been successful, and that filled me with satisfaction. It was nice to know that the

Grand Duke's heavy attacks had been shattered, and that we stood everywhere on hostile soil. But we had taken but one step towards the final decision against Russia, and it was with that goal that my innermost thoughts and feelings were most concerned. The fearful losses of the Russians in East and West Prussia ought, later on, to help the operations in Galicia. The Russian losses had been extraordinarily heavy in comparison with ours. Even Russia's enormous resources in manpower could not stand such a drain indefinitely.

Each of the successive tactical situations had made the fullest demands on my mental and spiritual energies. It is simply impossible to put it all on paper, the proud hopes, the despondency, the disappointments, the heart-searchings before a decision, the annoyance caused by one thing and another. I cannot describe the differences which had so often to be overcome, nor can I portray how deeply I felt for the troops, who had to bear the privations of a winter campaign in such inclement weather.

Later on I had happier times at Lötzen.

Our quarters and the office were small, but I liked them. I look back with pleasure on that time in the friendly little East Prussian town.

Whilst the fighting was still going on one of our most important tasks was the construction of rear positions. Along the whole of the eastern frontier of Prussia there arose a barbed-wire zone as the first permanent element of the new positions. Numerous special battalions composed of poorly trained men unfit for labour or service in the field were sent there at my request. They often had to work under enemy fire, and did so devotedly. The word "digger" is a title of honour. These units were subsequently transferred from the Eastern to the Western Front.

About this time General Headquarters ordered the number of regiments to a division in the West to be reduced from four to three, so that a division now had nine battalions instead of twelve. We did the same on our front. In this way a larger number of strategical units was formed. Operations were thus

THE WINTER BATTLE IN MASURIA

10. Army
8. Army
XXII.
I.C.D.
XXXIII.R.
XXXVI.R.
XXXVIII.R.
XXXIX.R.
XXI.
1.C.D.
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XX.
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facilitated, and no doubt this was a great advantage. But a division of nine battalions is too weak, tactically while the staff and administrative services are too large. After the war I should most certainly have advocated the re-establishment of the larger divisions.

It remains to be seen what will now happen to our proud and splendid army, which, assisted by allies of not very high military value, has kept its head above water for the last four years, defied the world and preserved its homeland almost intact from the horrors of war. Shall such an army vanish completely? Will Germany commit suicide once more? I cannot and shall never believe it. The seventy to eighty millions of Germans will some day come together and think things over. When they remember the overwhelming military achievements of this war, they will not forget what a really united army can do.

THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUSSIA, 1915

(MAP VI.)

I

THE offensive undertaken by General von Conrad in January had been unsuccessful. At the start ground was gained along the whole of the Carpathian ridge, but after that matters came to a standstill. The Russians made their counter-attack and pressed the Austrian Army hard. Only the plucky German Southern Army under General von Linsingen continued to make progress. Without these German troops the position could not have been maintained. The difficulties of this theatre of war in the winter were enormous. They subjected the troops, who worked wonders, to a terrible strain. The losses due to frost-bite were very great.

Przemysl was not relieved and fell on March 19th.

Whilst the attacks against German territory east of the Vistula abated early in April, the Grand Duke continued his offensive against the Austrian Army with the express purpose of descending on Hungary from the Carpathians and putting Austria-Hungary out of the war.

In April the Headquarters Staff at Teschen considered the military situation of the Dual Monarchy to be extremely grave. Italy's attitude had become increasingly doubtful. She had refused all Austria-Hungary's extensive concessions, the necessity for which I myself had urged on General von Conrad, and was fairly caught in the net spread by the Entente. In spite of their superiority in numbers the latter needed additional forces to

enable them to master us. It became more and more certain that we had to reckon on Italy entering the war on the side of our enemies. Austria-Hungary realized that she had to reinforce her troops on the Italian frontier considerably. The Serbian Army also seemed to require watching again.

The more the Austrian Army was obliged to weaken itself in Hungary and Galicia, in favour of other fronts, the more severely would it feel a Russian attack. Feeling at Teschen became ever more despondent. The Austrian liaison officer acting on instructions from General von Conrad, described the situation to us as one of the utmost gravity. Judging by my knowledge of the Austrian-Hungarian Army, this was certainly true. We forwarded these serious reports and our interpretation of them to G.H.Q.

About the middle of April the situation in the Carpathians became still more critical. General Boroevic's army was thrown back over the ridge, whilst further east the German Southern Army stood firm. The moment had arrived when help was absolutely necessary. We despatched the 25th Res. Div., which was with the 9th Army awaiting the order, by rail. They arrived just in time to avert the worst disaster.

We reported the measures we had taken to G.H.Q., who fully concurred in our view of the situation. They raised the Beskiden Corps under General von der Marwitz, who had hitherto commanded our 38th R.C. The Commander-in-Chief in the East also gave up the 4th Division and a newly formed division to reinforce the Carpathian front. But, in spite of all this, the situation there continued to be grave. We had to send reinforcements to the Serbian Front at the same time. These reinforcements afterwards joined General von Linsingen during his attack in May.

The German General Staff now resolved to try and obtain a decision against Russia. The plan was an ambitious one, and the very idea of weakening our forces in the West in spite of the critical situation there was a proof of their readiness to accept responsibility.

Since the engagements round Ypres in November the fighting

on the whole of the Western Front had developed into trench warfare. The cessation of the advance in France, the bending back of the right wing in September and the poor results of the fighting in Flanders had caused great depression in the Army in the West, and this had been deepened by the lack of ammunition. In January an attack near Soissons by the 3rd A.C., under their admirable and distinguished commander, General von Lochow, had had a most encouraging effect, and an attack by the Saxons near Craonne immediately afterwards led to splendid results. In February and March, after a great struggle, we had at last succeeded in shattering a determined French effort to break through in Champagne.

The future hopes of the Entente, were, for the moment, based on Russia alone. In England Kitchener's Army was in course of formation. This was a great creation of a distinguished organizer. Of the 32 divisions the first 12 could be ready by May. The Entente's war industry was extending. The United States had been added to the number of their contractors. Although at first we were able to hinder the export of war materials from America by economic means, this could not have a lasting effect. In our great struggle this action on the part of the United States could only be interpreted by us as evidence of favouritism towards our enemies. Her behaviour roused feelings of the greatest bitterness in us.

It was to be expected that the German offensive against Russia would give rise to enemy attacks on the Western Front for her relief. The critical engagements in May near La Bassée and Arras which gave us so much anxiety, illustrate the responsibility assumed by G.H.Q. when they risked a decisive battle in the East.

General von Mackensen, with the newly-formed 11th Army which consisted principally of troops from the Western Front, received instructions early in May to attack and crush in the flank of the Russian armies, which were pursuing their offensive in the Carpathians with supreme contempt of death. He was a distinguished man, of great accomplishments, and a brilliant soldier whose deeds will live in history for all time. Colonel

von Seeckt, formerly General von Lochow's Chief of Staff, was appointed his Chief of Staff. Thanks to his keen intellect and clear judgment this officer became one of the most prominent figures in the war.

Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria took command of the 9th Army, and well deserved this, the highest military rank. He readily put himself under Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, who was considerably junior to him in the service.

The Commander-in-Chief in the East received instructions to demonstrate on his front in order to pin down the enemy forces there.

II

The 9th Army had been enjoying a spell of rest. Early in March they thought they could bring off some success north of the Pilica and made an attack there, in spite of great difficulties. But they were soon forced to desist.

In accordance with the instructions of G.H.Q. they were now to attack at Skierniewice. We had received a supply of gas and anticipated great tactical results from its use, as the Russians were not yet fully protected against gas. We also had reason to expect local successes from an attack by the 10th Army east of Suwalki and instructions were issued accordingly.

The gas attack by the 9th Army which took place on May 2nd was not a success. The wind was favourable, but the troops had not been properly instructed. The gas was emitted as intended, but the troops imagined that the enemy ought not to be able to move at all. As the latter were still firing in places and our own artillery did not co-operate as it should have done, the infantry did not attack. They assumed that the gas had had no effect. The 9th Army were unlucky with gas. When they repeated the gas attack at the same place later, but not in connection with these operations, the wind veered round. We suffered severe losses by gassing. The troops were not fond of gas; the installation took too long and both officers and men

disliked waiting with full gas containers in the trenches for the wind.

The attack by the 10th Army at Suwalki was a tactical success.

I do not know whether these attacks really helped the operations as a whole, but tactically they were correct and on that ground they seemed to be justified. More effective support of General von Mackensen's operations would be forthcoming when we ourselves were able to initiate an extensive movement against the enemy. This was impossible on the fronts occupied by the 9th Army, Gallwitz's Army Detachment, and the 8th and 10th Armies, and was only practicable north of the Niemen in Lithuania and Courland. At the end of March and beginning of April we had received from the Western Front the 3rd Cav. Div. and the Bavarian Cav. Div., and these had been sent to Gumbinnen, as the left wing of the 10th Army was still very weak. These two divisions and the 6th Cav. Div., which was already stationed north of the Pregel, were to advance into Lithuania and Courland at the end of April, supported by the 6th, 36th and 78th Res. Divs. The Cavalry Divisions had been very carefully equipped for these operations. General von Lauenstein was placed in command here.

On April 27th our march into Lithuania and Courland began.

General von Lauenstein initiated the movement planned by the Commander-in-Chief in the East by marching in three columns on Shavli:

With the right column —Bavarian and 3rd Cav. Div. and 36th Res. Div.—through Jurborg.
With the centre column—78th Res. Div.—to the great Tauroggen road.
With the left column —6th Cav. Div. and 6th Res. Div.—from the neighbourhood of Memel.

On the evening of the 27th the 3rd Cav. Div. already stood south-east of the Tauroggen–Kielmy road not far from Skaudvile, whilst the Bavarian Cav. Div. had got to Rossieny. The 6th Cav. Div. had some hard fighting east of the frontier and had not made much progress by the 27th.

The enemy, whose main force had remained north-east of Tauroggen since the end of March, withdrew tc Kielmy and escaped, as the 3rd Cav. Div. did not attack. On April 28th the Bavarian and the 3rd Cav. Div. were near Kielmy and to the east the 6th were near Worny. In two days 75 kilometres had been covered. On the 29th the Cavalry Divisions were approaching Shavli and Kirschany. On the 30th Shavli, which the Russians had set on fire, was occupied. The 6th and 3rd Cav. Divs. continued the movement in the direction of Mitau, at which the 6th arrived on May 3rd. Here they could no longer break the enemy's defence and for the time they remained south-west of Mitau. Later on they withdrew behind the Windau, along the Mitau–Moscheiki railway. The 3rd Cav. Div. halted shortly after this and the Bavarian Cav. Div. came up with them. The two divisions then moved south-east from Shavli via Beissagola on Keidany. Here, however, the enemy's defence was stronger. They, therefore, yielded slowly before his pressure and retired behind the Dubissa in the direction of Kielmy.

The Infantry Divisions had also carried out some extraordinary forced marches. The 36th Res. Div. was pushed forward to the lower Dubissa to act as cover against attacks from Kovno, whilst the 78th and 6th Res. Div. had united near Shavli.

The object of this daring enterprise had been attained. The Russians were visibly being reinforced.

There now followed on an extended front on the Dubissa, from the mouth of the river up to Kielmy, round Shavli and to the north-west, a series of critical engagements which dragged on through May and June and proved most exhausting for both leaders and men. On our side they were carried out, both defensively and offensively, with a great numerical inferiority and in order to hold what we had gained and pin down the enemy further, we were obliged to bring up the 8th Cav. Div. of the 9th Army, the 1st Res. Div. and 2nd Cav. Div. from Gallwitz's Army Detachment and the weak Beckmann Division of the 10th Army to the north of the Niemen. The forces were thus increased to such an extent that it became necessary to combine them under one Army Command with its numerous administra

tive services; Corps commanders no longer sufficed. General Otto von Below was appointed to this command and the army was given the name of the "Niemen" Army. General von Scholtz was given the command of the 8th Army in his place.

We held the Dubissa line by hard fighting. Shavli could not be held permanently and it was only possible to bring back a part of the plentiful leather supplies which were of such great importance to us.

As early as May we had to abandon the town to the enemy, and remained due south of it. Our cavalry stood on the banks of the Windau from Kurschany downwards as far as Hasenpot; every now and then their line was broken by the enemy, but in spite of that they held the line of the river.

On the evening of May 7th the 3rd Cavalry Brigade took Libau. We were well aware that the Russian forces there were of very little value, but we did not know of the condition of the fortifications. Libau had been abandoned as a military port before the war. The extensive military harbour works were evidence of the ambition of imperial Russia, bent as she was on extending her power. The town contained some important industrial establishments, including one of the largest barbed wire factories in Russia. Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann suggested that a surprise attack should be made, and I agreed to this. Our troops were not very numerous. The 3rd Cavalry Brigade under Colonel von der Schulenberg, two or three battalions and a few batteries belonging to the Reserve Divisions already on the spot, were to approach the town from the east, whilst a Landsturm battalion approached it from the south along the coast and torpedo boats attacked from the sea. The fortress was not seriously defended. The fortifications were blown up by the garrison, and the coast guns turned out to be dummies. The weak garrison of 1,500 men surrendered when our troops forced their way in from the south and east. The taking of Libau was not a martial achievement worthy of a permanent place in history, but it was a happy little enterprise which all who took part in it recall with pleasure. Its most valuable feature was that it was carried out without any loss. It was always my endeavour

to achieve success at the least possible cost. Troops may take pride in bearing heavy losses and succeeding in spite of them. The commander must have a different point of view.

III

In the early hours of May 2nd, General von Mackensen, in a well-prepared attack brilliantly carried out by the troops, broke through the Russian front on the middle Dunajec. During the next few days the second and third Russian lines were taken. After this the Russians withdrew from Hungary northwards over the ridge of the Carpathians. Hungary was freed and the pressure on the Austrian Army definitely relieved.

It was high time, for Italy now entered the war.

Her army numbered over 600,000 men besides the numerous formations in second line which were not intended to take part in the fighting immediately. This was an enormous accession of strength to the Entente. By September the total strength of the Italian front-line troops had already increased to 900,000 men.

General von Mackensen pressed forward unceasingly in the direction of Jaroslav on the San and stormed the bridgehead on May 15th. The neighbouring Austrian armies linked up on either side of the advancing German troops and the German Southern Army also attacked and gained ground to the north beyond Stryj. At the beginning of June Przemysl was again wrested from the Russians.

North of the upper Vistula the Russians abandoned the Nida and withdrew towards the Vistula. General von Woyrsch was able, in mid-May, to advance as far as Kielce whilst keeping his left wing in position.

The Russian armies between the Carpathians and the Pilica had thus been obliged to abandon their positions and lost heavily in so doing. But, speaking generally, the allies were only able to follow up with frontal attacks, although they made desperate endeavours to effect local encircling movements, and more

particularly to fall on the western flank of the Russian Carpathian Army. An attempt at an enveloping movement made by the right wing of the Austrian Army in the Bukovina was frustrated; it was not strong enough, and ended in a withdrawal before enemy pressure.

The difficulty of keeping up communications with the rear stopped the advance on the San for a time. These difficulties were overcome early in June, and the attack was resumed. The heaviest fighting always fell to the German troops. On June 22nd Lemberg was recovered, and soon afterwards Rava Ruska was stormed, and the Russians were forced to retreat still further towards the Bug. They were simultaneously continuing their retreat down the Vistula in the direction of Lublin–Ivangorod.

At Lötzen we had, of course, watched the progress of events in Galicia with the greatest anxiety, and never ceased to make plans, aiming at more active support of the operations against Russia. We had given up nearly everything we had. But the Russian forces on our front, especially in front of the 9th Army, had weakened. The enemy had also withdrawn troops for Galicia from the southern frontier of West and East Prussia. They had moved troops from the front facing the 10th Army to Lithuania when we invaded that province. The enemy front, therefore, was thinner all along our line. We had also withdrawn a good many troops by degrees and surrendered them for the operations in the south-east.

We should be able to do so more as time went on, but with such an enormously long front there had to be a limit to the process. Our positions had, at any rate, to be manned sufficiently to permit of the relief of each individual soldier. It was not until June, when General Headquarters assigned some newly-formed Landsturm regiments to us, that we were able to think of preparing divisions for our own offensive operations.

The frontal retreat of the Russian Army in Galicia, however painful for them, did not result in any decisive military victory. They withdrew, fighting all the way, just as far as we could venture to advance, having regard to our communica-

tions. They were not yet fighting on their own soil, and until that stage had been reached they could afford to abandon large areas. Moreover, in these frontal engagements our losses were not inconsiderable. It remained to be seen whether other plans would not hold out better prospects. We could add nine or ten divisions to Gallwitz's Detachment, which had now developed into the 12th Army, for a concentrated offensive in the direction of the Lower Narew, but we had no great hopes of this. It was to be assumed with certainty that the Russians, at the best, would offer resistance, and then withdraw as they had done in Galicia.

In theory the operations which we had contemplated after the winter campaign seemed more promising; that is, press forward along the Osowiec–Grodno line, and perhaps also past Lomza. Such a movement might have had decisive results. It was by far the shortest way to the rear of the Russian forces which were retreating from East Galicia between the Vistula and the Bug. We reconnoitred the swamps on either side of Osowiec in the hope of finding some way across, but, as we had foreseen, the results were unsatisfactory. The condition of the ground put all thought of crossing there out of the question. We had to reckon on stout resistance on the Osowiec–Grodno line, a very strong tactical position in itself and presumably strongly held. We could not expect to overcome this resistance and the other difficulties which lay before us. It was with the deepest regret that I felt myself unable to agree to such an offensive, even at the suggestion of General Headquarters.

Every operation further to the north increased the distance from the decisive point south-east of Grodno. This disadvantage would have to be counteracted by speed, especially if the rate of the enemy retreat was accelerated. In that case the enemy flank was more and more likely to be found in the direction Vilna–Minsk. A big German advance between Grodno–Kovno would not be sufficiently effective in itself. We should find ourselves in a *cul de sac*. It seemed more advisable, in the first instance, to take Kovno by a direct attack of the 10th Army from the west, and a simultaneous enveloping movement

by the Niemen Army from the north. Once this fortress had fallen, the corner stone of the Russian defence on the Niemen, the road to Vilna, and to the rear of the Russian forces would be open. They would then have to retreat with all possible speed. If the Niemen Army and the 10th Army could receive even small reinforcements at the right moment and be supplied with sufficient transport, it was to be hoped that they could fall on the northern flank of the retreating host, via Vilna, with such force that the summer campaign of 1915 would end in a decisive defeat of the Russian armies. The harder we pressed our advance from East Galicia into the area east of the Bug, the more likely were we to achieve this success.

In pursuance of this idea the Niemen Army was reinforced by the 41st Inf. Div., 76th R.D. and the 4th Cav. Div. of the 8th Army.

The attack on Kovno was facilitated by the fact that, in mid-May, after a Russian advance on Schaki from the woods to the west of Kovno had been repulsed, our line in these woods had been so far advanced that it was possible to bring our heaviest artillery into position. The Russian advance took us by surprise, and made considerable progress at first towards the frontier. It was impossible to tell whether it was the forerunner of a heavier move against the weak north wing of the 10th Army. The Staff of this army quickly concentrated near Wilkowischki parts of several divisions under General Beckmann, who very soon drove back the enemy. We experienced a certain amount of relief when the situation became easier at that point. General Beckmann subsequently crossed the Niemen, where he was placed under the Command of the army of that name.

The preparations for the operations against Kovno were just about to be begun when His Majesty commanded me and the Field-Marshal to go to Posen for July 1st. Here, at the suggestion of the Chief of the General Staff, and after having heard the Field-Marshal's proposals, the Kaiser decided that the Polish offensive should be continued, and, in particular, that the 12th Army should break through the enemy line facing them, and push on to the Narew, whilst the 9th Army and General

von Woyrsch should advance towards the Vistula. The allied armies were also to continue the advance between the Bug and the Vistula.

Our General Staff believed that in these operations part of the Russian forces still in the bend of the Vistula could be annihilated. I had to keep my views to myself and hope that the movement I wanted would be carried out when General von Gallwitz had reached the Narew, and found that he also could only make progress by means of frontal attacks. I thought that even then there would still be time to put it into execution. The advance of our line in Lithuania and Courland by the troops already there might serve as a favourable introduction to the operation. But we had to abandon any idea of getting the reinforcements hitherto earmarked for Courland, and taking Kovno.

IV

In accordance with the instructions from General Headquarters, preparations for the crossing of the Narew were now begun on the largest scale. Not only the 12th Army, but the right wing of the 8th Army also were got into position, so that the 12th Army should advance between the Vistula and the Schkwa with Pultusk–Roshan as their objective, and the 8th Army should reach the river between the Schkwa and the mouth of the Pissa.

General von Gallwitz decided to make his first attack on either side of Prasnysz. For this attack he had at his disposal:

1st A.C., with the 2nd and 37th Infantry Divisions.

13th A.C., with the 3rd and 26th Infantry Divisions and 4th Guards Division.

17th A.C., with the 35th and 36th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Guards Reserve Division.

11th A.C., with the 38th Infantry Division and von Wernitz' Division.

17th R.C., with von Breugel's Division, the 14th Landwehr Division and Dickhuth's Corps.

General von Scholtz attacked with the 75th Reserve Division and the 10th Landwehr Division.

In preparation for the attack we had concentrated, especially in the area of the 12th Army, what was then for the Eastern Front a very large amount of heavy artillery.

Both armies began the attack on July 13th. Thanks to the careful organization by the Army Headquarters Staff, and the excellent spirit of the troops, it was entirely successful.

General von Gallwitz's divisions gained ground, got right into the enemy's system of defences and continued to press forward. On the 15th, after heavy fighting, a strong rear line of defence was stormed, and by the 17th the Narew had been reached, whilst the right wing had arrived north-west of Novo Georgievsk. The Field-Marshal and I were present with the 12th Army at the battle of the 13th and 14th; we were most favourably impressed by both leaders and troops. The 12th Army, like the 11th Army in West Galicia, had gained a great deal of ground in the first attack.

On the Narew, as had been the case on the San, a pause in the operations now ensued. Pultusk and Roshan were stormed on July 23rd. Ostrolenkà was taken on August 4th, and thus the crossing of the Narew on a wide front was secured. Other forces moved against Sieroc and Segershe, so that as soon as these works were taken, Novo Georgievsk could be cut off from the north-east.

The 8th Army, in line with the 12th, had reached the Narew between the Schkwa and the Pissa, but had only managed to place a weak force on the southern bank of the river near the confluence of the Schkwa.

The Russians offered stubborn resistance everywhere and suffered very heavy losses.

The 9th Army and General von Woyrsch's Detachment had also gone forward in the Polish bend of the Vistula. Woyrsch's Detachment had beaten the Russians on the Ilshanka and at Radom, occupied Radom on July 19th, and forced the Russians to retreat behind the Vistula. As a consequence of this, on July 21st the Russians north of the Pilica also retreated behind

the Vistula and the outer defences of Warsaw. The 9th Army, which was still weak, now advanced to the attack of this position. Their further mission was to cut off Novo Georgievsk from the south.

Between the upper Bug and the Vistula the allied armies gained further ground to the north in successive frontal attacks.

Far from the great battlefield in Poland, the Niemen Army had also started an offensive in the middle of July and made great progress eastwards.

I was now quite convinced that the time had come to initiate the movement I had recommended, a movement on the lower Niemen against Kovno, followed by an attack in full force in the rear of the Russian armies. The troops could be taken from Woyrsch's Detachment and the 9th, 12th and 8th Armies. We had delayed quite long enough already. The taking of Kovno would take time, and the Russian retreat in Galicia was already far advanced. But it seemed still possible to achieve great things, at any rate, something bigger than could be effected by the operations then in progress. These could end in nothing more than a pure frontal west-east retirement of the enemy.

General Headquarters stuck to their point of view, and still preferred their movement over the Vistula and Narew. We were not allowed to weaken the armies engaged in that operation for the benefit of the 10th and Niemen Armies. A new division from the West was assigned to the 12th and 8th Armies by General Headquarters. Whether our General Staff, for reasons connected with the general military situation, no longer wished to embark upon such an extensive and far-reaching plan as that we had suggested, I have not been able to ascertain.

The 9th, 12th and 8th Armies continued to advance on the same lines as before and in the strength settled by General Headquarters. Preparations for the attack on Novo Georgievsk were begun. At the same time, we decided to take Kovno and let the Niemen Army continue its attack. Both good as far as they went.

V

As I had expected, the operations of the allied armies in Poland to the east of the Vistula meant purely frontal pressure on the enemy and incessant fighting. Repeated efforts to envelop the Russians ended in failure. The Russian armies were certainly kept on the move, but they escaped. They frequently made fierce counter-attacks with strong forces, and again and again took advantage of the many marshy areas in the neighbourhood of rivers and streams to rally and offer prolonged resistance. Owing to the continuous movement for many weeks on bad roads and, generally speaking, in bad weather, the strain on our troops was tremendous. Clothing and boots were in rags and tatters. Supply was difficult. It was almost impossible to find billets, as the Russians systematically destroyed or burned stores and villages. They drove the cattle before them and left them to die on the high road. The population which they carried off with them were driven into the swamps at the sides of the road if they blocked the way. Many scenes in the Russian campaign have been indelibly imprinted on my memory.

The supply and transport conditions became more unfavourable from day to day, especially with the 12th Army, which was getting further and further away from its railheads. Communications with the rear were improved for the 8th Army after the capture of Lomza–Osowiec. It was then possible, but still very difficult, to send supplies from that side. What vehicles we had were principally employed in bringing up ammunition. In attack our exhausted infantry required more support from the artillery the further east they got. As the distances increased, the difficulty in bringing up ammunition increased proportionately. Thus the advance slowed down and lost its impetus.

After the conclusion of peace with Russia, a highly-placed Russian officer told me he had never been able to understand why we had not pushed on with greater vigour, as if we had the Russian Army would have gone to pieces. Officers and

men did everything in their power to bring about that result, but when perfect discipline, the greatest enthusiasm and the most strenuous efforts on the part of every individual cannot prevent a stage of exhaustion, the will of the commander is equally powerless.

We built a branch line from Willenberg via Chorshele to Ostrolenka, and repaired the other lines as quickly as possible, but the lines of communication by road became ever longer and far exceeded the one hundred and twenty kilometres which we had regarded as the extreme limit. The Entente were better off during their big attacks in the summer of 1918. They had numerous railway connections running direct from behind their front line, and were able to bring up their enormous supply of munitions continuously, and thus support their infantry effectively. Motor transport enabled the infantry to recuperate in good, well-furnished billets, and return to the line again and again with renewed vigour.

Operations continued in accordance with the plans of the General Staff. At the end of July Cholm and Lublin fell into our hands. Further east we were not making much progress, and thus gave the Russians time to withdraw troops from the salient we were making in their line, and send them south to form a new front.

General von Woyrsch took the western bridgehead of Ivangorod, and on July 28th crossed the Vistula to the north of this point under the enemy's nose and was heavily attacked. I thought this crossing very hazardous. Tactically it succeeded, but it did not alter the general strategic situation.

The Russians facing the 9th Army withdrew from the outer defences of Warsaw, and early in August from Warsaw itself.

On August 5th the 9th Army occupied the capital of Poland. This army was taken out of our command and placed under the direct orders of General Headquarters. Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria was, at the same time, put in command of Woyrsch's Detachment. No doubt General Headquarters had their own good reasons for thus reorganizing the commands, but it did not simplify matters for me, especially as the lines of

communication of the 9th Army remained under our control. It was necessary for our further advance that I should make very many arrangements direct with this Army. The movements of the 9th and 12th Armies were very closely related. General Headquarters were far too busy for me to venture to trouble them with such details.

The capture of Warsaw gave us special satisfaction. We had fought so hard for it in the autumn of 1914. In that campaign were laid the foundations of the present successes, of which the occupation of Warsaw was the sign and symbol.

During the following days Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's Army Group crossed the Vistula between Ivangorod and Warsaw on a wide front. Once again General Headquarters attempted to effect an enveloping movement by directing this Army Group straight on Brest-Litovsk, whilst strong Russian forces were still north of Lublin. But in vain; the Russians got away. Whilst Field-Marshal von Mackensen was struggling towards Brest-Litovsk, Prince Leopold's group had advanced to the Bug below the fortress.

After the crossing of the Narew by the 12th Army at the end of July, General von Gallwitz had cast his eyes due south towards the Bug. He still hoped to succeed in enveloping the enemy who had not yet retreated from Warsaw. With that end in view he made his principal thrust with his right wing, from Wyshkow to the Bug. As I had feared and General von Gallwitz had also thought possible, these hopes were not fulfilled. Somewhere about the 10th, the 12th Army received instructions to march east, with the right wing moving up the Bug. In this way it came into close touch with the 8th Army, which, after the fall of Ostrolenka on August 5th, had gained more ground on the southern bank of the Narew, and was now advancing with Lomza as its objective.

In the meantime Sieroc and Segershe had fallen, also Dombe; Novo Georgievsk had been invested on all sides. The capture of this fortress was entrusted by the Field-Marshal to General von Beseler. The troops of the 9th and 12th Armies investing Novo Georgievsk were placed under his command. He also

received a considerable number of the heaviest Austro-Hungarian howitzers.

The plans for the capture of Novo Georgievsk, the command of the 8th and 10th Armies, the attack on Kovno and the situation in Lithuania and Courland made further great demands on myself and my Staff. Although we had not the same free hand in conducting the operations of the summer campaign of 1915 as in previous campaigns, but followed the broad directions given by General Headquarters, there was still an enormous amount of work for me to do, and the necessity of taking and executing a number of decisions, both great and small. Added to this there were differences of opinion with General von Falkenhayn, such as are only too likely to occur between men of independent views, but which made it more than ever incumbent on me to carry out most punctiliously the plans of G.H.Q., which were opposed to mine, rather than my own or those that coincided with mine.

VI

The capture of Novo Georgievsk did not directly affect the progress of the operations. It was an independent operation, taking place in the rear of the armies pushing on eastwards. General von Beseler, the conqueror of Antwerp, and Colonel von Sauberzweig, his extremely energetic Chief of Staff, guaranteed that there should be no question of a so-called siege with all its attendant complications. A mere investment of Novo Georgievsk would be enough to bring about its fall. The garrison of 80,000 could not hold out for long. It is astonishing that the Grand Duke should have let it come to this, whereas, later on, Brest-Litovsk and Grodno were evacuated. He ought to have told himself that it was impossible to hold the fortress, and that the condition of the fortifications was not good enough to withstand heavy high-angle fire.

General von Beseler decided to attack the north-eastern forts. The Mlawa–Ciechanov–Nasielsk railway, which had been restored some time previously, indicated this side of the *enciente*.

The main object was to make the distance to be traversed by road as short as possible for the artillery and ammunition supplies being sent up by rail, so as to avoid the waste of time involved in making field and light railways. The strength of the front was of no importance, for a plentiful supply of heavy shell put the attack on equal terms. The artillery was brought up as soon as the railway had been completed as far as Nasielsk.

On the 9th of August the investment was completed, and soon afterwards the artillery and ammunition supplies were established in position. By the middle of August the batteries were able to open fire. Its effect did not appear satisfactory. The voices of those wise after the event were now raised to say that nothing could be done with the curtailed attack method; what had been right in one case was wrong in the other. This vacillation was soon overcome. Under continuous fire the north-eastern works were stormed and taken. Then followed the attack along the whole front to the north of the Vistula. Our troops, which were mainly composed of Landsturm and Landwehr forces, behaved extremely well, and Novo Georgievsk fell on August 19th.

Soon afterwards His Majesty the Kaiser inspected the fortress and thanked the troops. The Field-Marshal and I were commanded to be present. I was thus able to see for myself the devastating effects of the heavy artillery fire and the poor construction of the works.

The troops released by this event were sent to the 10th Army, with the concurrence of G.H.Q., and this force thus received the reinforcements it required, unfortunately very late in the day. The heaviest batteries were to be sent against Grodno. Kovno had already fallen.

By the end of August the Russian General-Government of Poland had fallen completely into the hands of the Allies. As before, Germany and Austria-Hungary divided its administration. The boundary west of the Vistula was formed by the Pilica, and on the east it more or less followed the lower Wieprz. We formed a German General-Government of Warsaw under General von Beseler, and the Austrians established a Military-

Government of Lublin. The partition was injurious to the common interest of the Allies; many imperatively necessary measures were wrecked on it.

The Commander-in-Chief in the East had had the administration of occupied Poland in his hands since the autumn of 1914. He now made way for General von Beseler, and had more than enough administrative cares in the north-east instead.

Novo Georgievsk will possibly prove the last ring-fortress to be taken after investment. Not that I believe in disarmament The world will very soon learn its lesson in regard to that delusion. However much it may be regretted, mankind will never come to that. But the day of the ring-fortress is past. They cannot stand against modern artillery and its scale of munitionment, and must give place to something else. Land fortifications will still be necessary, but they will assume the character of fortified lines along the frontier.

VII

When, on August 10th, the 12th Army received instructions to march with the right wing up the Bug, on the west it was backing against the 8th Army, which was advancing on either side of the Narew against Lomza. I endeavoured to maintain this echelon as the advance progressed in order to make use of the possibilities of mutual co-operation on the flanks. But by degrees the two armies came up level with their inner wings on the Ostrolenka–Lapy railway. South of the Bug Field-Marshal Prince Leopold's Army Group had moved forward to correspond.

The Commander-in-Chief in the East had to see to the tactical details for the advance, which were unimportant, having regard to the campaign as a whole. Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann and I had frequent intercourse with the armies. The two Chiefs of Staff, Colonel Marquard and Major Count Schwerin were excellent soldiers, who gave effective support to their chiefs.

On August 9th Lomza was taken from the south-west. For some time past we had had a squadron of bombing aeroplanes

at our disposal in East Prussia. The forts in which an enemy corps or army staff had its quarters were often bombed. Splendid results had been reported; but when I was able to have the damage inspected it was impossible to verify it. In the interests of the troops I was glad of this, as they were able to use the forts as billets. It was only later that our bombs became effective, when the airmen took more interest in bombing work.

As the advance progressed it became evident that Mackensen's and Prince Leopold's Army Groups were pushing north, and thus forcing the 12th and 8th Armies to the left. On August 18th Field-Marshal von Mackensen had arrived before Brest-Litovsk; Prince Leopold of Bavaria was approaching the Bialoviesa Forest, and the 12th Army Bialystok, the former seat of the excellent Prussian administration of New East Prussia at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The 8th Army pressed forward towards Grodno in the narrow space between Bialystok and the Narew, so as to capture Osowiec from the south. This fortress was invested on August 22nd. We had intended taking it from the east and north, yet we took it from the south. Such is war.

In the latter days of August both armies continued the advance in a more north-easterly direction beyond the Bialystok–Osowiec line, the 12th Army marching north of Wolkowysk, and the 8th Army on Grodno. Both these armies, therefore, were gradually losing touch, tactically, with the two southern army groups, which, after the occupation of Brest-Litovsk on August 25th–26th marched on towards Pinsk and Baranovici. By degrees they came within the sphere of the operations which were in preparation further north.

Early in September the 8th and 12th Armies reached the south-eastern outskirts of Grodno. In a fortnight's time or so they were to be at Lida, north of the Niemen. About eight weeks would then have elapsed since the offensive started. During this operation the 12th Army had had to make a long detour to the south. How much better would it have been if, instead of this movement, an attack on the Lomza–Grodno line had been possible. That could not be done. But an opera-

tion to the north of Grodno, combined with the taking of Kovno, would have reached this point much more quickly and easily, and have been far more effective if it had been carried out in full strength, even as late as the first fortnight in August.

For a time it looked as though G.H.Q. wished to suspend the advance in the East. They transferred large portions of Field-Marshal von Mackensen's army, and later of the 12th and 8th Armies too, to the West and south Hungary. But they allowed the operations which had been begun after the taking of Kovno and our advance in Lithuania and Courland to take their course.

VIII

The storming of Kovno was a very bold stroke. In order to accomplish it troops had to be withdrawn from the centre and right wing of the 10th Army, which already held a very long front. Only thus were we able to concentrate a comparatively strong force for the attack west of Kovno. The Commander-in-Chief in the East and General von Eichhorn made themselves responsible for this strain on the rest of their front. The General had often complained to me that the 10th Army had remained inactive so long, and he now set about his new task with zest. He and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Hell, were men of great self-confidence and daring. General von Eichhorn was an officer of brilliant intellectual qualities, and had trained his troops in an exemplary manner.

The reinforced 40th A.C., under General Litzmann, was to carry out the attack.

The General was extremely impetuous and his influence on the men was very great. He had laid the foundations of his military fame in the course of the break through at Brsheshiny on November 22nd to 25th, 1914. He once wrote against the Guards Officers' Corps, but he recognized on this occasion what a power this Officers' Corps stood for. I myself am proud of having been an infantryman of the line, and in the 8th Regiment of the Leib-Grenadiers I learned to know a unit whose

Officers' Corps had a special tradition handed down, as in the Guards Officers' Corps. Such traditions are quite justifiable, but they should not lead to favouritism and vanity; when that occurs they arouse resentment and should be discarded.

The attack on Kovno was rendered more difficult by the lack of the heaviest howitzers. Such as had been supplied by G.H.Q. at the end of July had to be used at Novo Georgievsk. All we got was a few additional batteries, which could be brought into position by light railways and the range of which was only short. But we allowed no difficulties to deter us, and we built the railways. A broad survey of the position made it clear that the attack could only be made between the Wirballen-Kovno railway and the Niemen. The right wing of the attacking troops was always very seriously threatened, and the menace increased the more ground we gained. At any moment the Russians might rake its flank very effectively with their artillery. The left wing was covered to the north by a Landsturm brigade, which during the offensive of the Niemen Army had been pushed forward across the Dubissa as far as the north-west works of Kovno.

By the beginning of August the railways were ready. There was now a lack of ammunition for the heavy field howitzers. I gave up my reserve, for the Director of Field Ordnance in the East, Lieutenant-Colonel Rostock, always had something in hand. So at last, on August 8th, after much trouble, everything was ready and the attack could begin. No fortress has ever been attacked with such scanty material, but the troops entrusted with the work were inspired by the gallant spirit of their commander.

At this time, as I mentioned before, the Russians were still close to the Vistula opposite Warsaw.

On August 6th the infantry in the assembly positions had got up close, in order to obtain better artillery observation. On the 8th the bombardment began. During the next few days a number of strong positions had to be stormed. The vigour of the attack appeared to be waning, but General Litzmann continued to work his way along the line of forts until the 15th. Luckily the Russians proved to be incapable of withstanding the fire of the heavy artillery. A fresh attack, by a company which

had joined the other troops, succeeded on the 16th in breaking through the western line of forts. On the 17th General Litzmann crossed the Niemen and took the town and the eastern forts. The booty was not so great as at the taking of Novo Georgievsk, for it was not a case of storming a fortress which had been previously invested. The garrison had a way out in rear, and was in touch with the Russian forces on the east front. I have never been able to find out why that army did not help them, or whether the speedy fall of the works took it by surprise.

All the bridges, including the very important railway bridge, and also the tunnel on the east bank, had been destroyed, the latter, fortunately, not completely. It was soon restored. We were thus to a certain extent able to open a line of communications east of the Niemen in the direction of Wilna, even before the railway bridge was ready. It was a vital matter for the troops that it should be put in working order again if the operations were to progress as we hoped.

The town of Kovno was saved, with the exception of the factories ; these had been burned down and the population had fled. I had an opportunity of seeing how difficult it was for the troops to find billets without the co-operation of the inhabitants.

Immediately after the taking of Kovno General von Eichhorn sent General Litzmann and his storm troops on towards the Wilna railway, and himself took the troops next in line across the Niemen. At the same time he directed the rest of the 10th Army, the 21st A.C., under General von Hutier, to push on with Olita as their main objective, and lighter forces to advance through Augustowo Forest towards Grodno. These forces co-operated very closely with the advancing 8th Army, with which they were almost level.

General von Eichhorn intended to force the crossing of the Niemen along the whole line, an operation which fitted into the framework of our plans. It was entirely in accordance with our views. If, on the one hand, much remained to be done, especially where the armies were converging, on the other the armies elsewhere did much by independent decisions to facilitate the direction of the whole. Their sole duty was to

report in good time their view of the situation and what they wished to do. The junction of two armies is always a point where friction is inevitable. On the Eastern Front, especially in trench warfare, this was not so obvious as it was subsequently on the Western Front. The boundary lines there sometimes developed into high walls, which one could only look along, but not over. One of the most important duties of the Higher Command was to level this wall and ensure that the points of junction did not become weak points tactically.

The centre and right wing of the 10th Army advanced, but with heavy fighting. Under pressure of events at Kovno, the Russians had completely destroyed the railways and bridges over the Niemen, abandoned the left bank, and withdrawn in the direction of Orany. By August 26th the 21st A.C. had taken Olita. By the end of August the 10th Army had crossed the Niemen and was slowly advancing towards the Grodno–Wilna railway. Before they reached the railway they met with very strong resistance, which was too much for them at first. The Russians began to bring up reinforcements from East to Northern Poland.

The tactical results of the advance of the 10th Army across the Niemen in the direction of Grodno were small, owing to the vast region of forest to the north-east of that fortress. But the Russians had become nervous. They abandoned Grodno with amazing speed when the right wing of the 10th Army, and more particularly the 8th Army, began their attack. On September 1st General von Scholtz, with the 75th R.D., took the south-west forts of the town and the town itself was occupied on the 2nd, after violent street fighting. But on the Kotra and its northern tributary from Lake Osjery, not far east of Grodno, he came up against strong enemy resistance.

The siege artillery was no longer needed, and was placed at the disposal of G.H.Q.

General von Gallwitz reached the Svislosz, fighting all the way. Prince Leopold of Bavaria's army group had traversed the Bialoviesa Forest, which, by the way, was not an impassable swamp, but well provided with roads. Further south the troops were still advancing on Pinsk.

IX

Up to that time the engagements of the Niemen Army during the months of July and August had only been directly connected with the main operations in so far as they had drawn enemy forces in their direction. There was, of course, a tactical co-operation on the Niemen between the inner wings of the 10th and the Niemen Army. With the attack on Kovno this co-operation became closer, and at the taking of the fortress led to their fighting on the same field of battle ; it then relaxed again. From now onwards the association of these armies was to take a prominent part in the operations.

General Otto von Below was fighting in a distinct and separate area and his actions were therefore more independent than those of the other Army Commanders, who were fighting on a joint plan. We were able to confine ourselves to giving general instructions for the conduct of the campaign.

Up to the middle of July the Niemen Army had held the line of the Dubissa to south-west of Shavli, and of the Wenta and Windau from Hasenpot down to the coast. At the beginning of the operations General von Below was ordered to make an enveloping attack on the strong enemy forces near Shavli, and, after securing his left against attack from the direction of Riga, to push east, north of the Niemen. These operations were in particularly good hands. General von Below, who had already been regarded in peace time as an unusually efficient and self-reliant officer, had led his troops with great prudence and foresight during the battle of Tannenberg, and distinguished himself in the battle of the Masurian Lakes by the effective disposition of his forces. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg held his manly and upright character in high esteem and in November suggested to His Majesty that he should take over the command of the 8th Army, although he was one of the most junior Corps Commanders in the service. General von Below had fully justified

the confidence placed in him by his Commander-in-Chief. His Chief of Staff, General von Böckmann, had long been on the General Staff, and during the war had proved himself to be a good leader of troops and to have the makings of a good Chief of Staff. The two men worked together in complete harmony. At headquarters at Lötzen we could feel confident that, with the forces at their disposal, they would exploit to the full the possibilities of the operations north of the Niemen.

The communications of the Niemen Army were a difficult problem. The standard gauge railway stopped at Laugzargen, north-east of Tilsit, and Memel. The Niemen, although navigable, could only be used to bring up supplies for the right wing of the army, and the traffic control was so poor that it could not be relied upon. An attempt to tow the troops, so urgently required to reinforce the right wing, in barges up the river proved a failure. The string of barges ran aground on sandbanks on the Russian side of the river.

Libau could only be used with the greatest caution as a supply base. At that time the Russian fleet and English submarines dominated the eastern part of the Baltic. Nevertheless, with the material we had found there, we managed to maintain an inadequate service on the railway running east from Libau. We very soon began to build a light railway between Laugzargen–Tauroggen–Kielmy; but it made slow progress, owing to the shortage of labour. When our plans for a large operation began to mature we had to develop a more complete network of railways. The shortest connection with the Russian railways ran from Memel to Prekuln, east of Libau. The construction of this stretch of line was begun, but had to be stopped when the C.-in-C. in the East had to give up railway labour for the construction of the Willenberg–Ostrolenka railway. By the beginning of July the railway to Prekuln was completed; it was of inestimable value, although its working still left much to be desired. The Libau–Moscheiki railway was now patched up. Subsequently we also established a connection via Koshedary, east of Kovno, with the network of railways in Lithuania. Finally we began the construction of the Tauroggen–Radsiwilischki

main line (south-east of Shavli). The wooden bridge over the Dubissa is said to have been a work of art.

About the middle of July, after the arrival of the reinforcements which had been dispatched in June, the grouping of the Niemen Army was completed. Army Headquarters were bitterly disappointed, because, owing to the attack on the Narew, they did not receive the quota of troops they had hoped for. They adhered to their original plan of operation notwithstanding. The line of the Dubissa to Kielmy was not to be very strongly held. The 1st R.C. was concentrated for attack between Kielmy and Shavli. The line of the Windau was lightly held to the point where a strong group was posted north of the Libau railway. Here there were two or three infantry and as many cavalry divisions.

On July 14th, when, in North Poland, Prasnysz had just fallen, and further south the Russians were still west of the Vistula and south of Lublin–Cholm, General von Below crossed the Windau with the intention of enveloping the strong Russian forces near Shavli by an advance from the north in the direction of Mitau, and pressing forward from the south-east with the 1st R.C. The weak centre was to be held back. The right wing of the army on the Dubissa was to stand by for the time being, and only to join in the operations after some progress had been made.

Apparently the Russians had not expected an attack, nor had they discovered this extension of the line to the north. In the direction of Okmjany they attacked the 6th R.D., advancing in the centre, and forced it to withdraw to the west. But their right flank was threatened to such an extent that they were unable to follow up this success.

By the 17th the infantry divisions on the left wing had beaten the Russians at Autz, but owing to what had occurred to the 6th R.D., they had to be brought back south. In consequence of this the enveloping movement was not effective. In the course of continuous fighting, which lasted until July 23rd, these operations, which became known as the "Battle of Shavli," ended with the retreat of the 5th Russian Army beyond Shavli towards Ponieviesh. Portions of it got away, as the German cavalry

in their rear lacked fire-power. Ponieviesh was occupied by us on July 29th. On the left wing the cavalry reached out to the Bay of Riga and joined up with the infantry advancing on Mitau, which was taken on August 1st. Further south the Dubissa was crossed, and by July 29th the Kovno–Ponieviesh line had been occupied.

Communications had now to be established once more, and the troops supplied with ammunition. Transport had been sent in large quantities to the 12th and 8th Armies and the Niemen Army was correspondingly short. Its further advance now began to slow down. On the day on which Kovno was taken the troops were on the banks of the Svienta and the Shara. Here there was a long stop, whilst the left wing pushed forward towards the Dvina. To the south of Riga the Russians were holding an important bridgehead, which was to be a thorn in our flesh for a long time to come. On the other hand, early in September the Dvina was reached between Uxküll and Friedrichstadt, and the enemy thrown back to the opposite bank.

Meanwhile the Russians had been reinforced. The weak forces of the Niemen Army were distributed over a very wide area, so that, for the time being, they were unable to advance further without reinforcement. They were in touch with the left wing of the 10th Army, as the latter, after the taking of Kovno, again encountered strong enemy forces half-way to Vilna.

A raid by the fleet in the Bay of Riga, on August 8th, had no influence on the operations on land.

The rapid advance of the Niemen Army showed that still more could be done if the forces had been stronger and better equipped, especially in regard to transport.

X

In the second half of August the idea of continuing operations east of the Niemen had assumed more definite shape. The attack on the flank of the retreating army from Poland could only be carried out, if at all, in the direction of Kovno–Vilna–Minsk.

This attack was to be carried out by the 10th Army, whilst the 8th and 12th Armies and the Southern Army Groups were to keep up the pressure on the enemy.

The operations of the 10th Army required that its flank should be protected on the north from attack from the railway from Riga to Dvinsk, which is a junction for several lines from the north-east and east, and also from any movement from the Polotzk–Molodetchno and Orsha–Borissov–Minsk lines. The Niemen Army was to continue its advance with Dvinsk as the objective, whilst a strong contingent of cavalry advanced towards the two railway lines mentioned above.

According to this plan the Russian front facing the 10th and Niemen Armies, which, although continuous, was weak to the north-east of Kovno, would be pierced; that is, it would be forced back through Vilna to Dvinsk, whilst the cavalry divisions advanced on Polotzk–Minsk.

The question remained whether the operations would still be profitable now that the Russians had retreated so far to the east. There was no doubt that every day's delay made the prospects less promising. I considered whether we should not content ourselves with a thrust through Olita–Orany on Lida. I rejected this idea, because all similar endeavours during the past summer campaign to accomplish an outflanking movement had been unsuccessful. Accordingly, I still pinned my faith to the bigger scheme, because its success would bring a more substantial reward. In this case also we were compelled to take a leap in the dark. It was clear that the 10th Army needed reinforcements, and the troops which had been investing Novo Georgievsk were employed for that purpose.

The 8th and 12th Armies had closed in on each other during the operations, and we could withdraw divisions, in addition to those already earmarked for the West. They were conveyed to Kovno, and from thence they were assigned to the left wing of the 10th or the right wing of the 8th Army.

Meanwhile the 10th Army had been heavily attacked from Vilna. The enemy had brought reinforcements from Poland to the north. In the hope of turning the enemy's flank, the 10th

Army, like the troops it confronted, had been reinforced on the north in the direction of Vilkomir. The fighting was particularly heavy on the northern bank of the Vilia.

We passed once more through a period of great anxiety. I would gladly have expedited the opening of the operations, but the capacity of the Wirballen–Kovno railway was limited, owing to its unfinished condition. Everything took an endless time, and in addition to this the roads were bad and the troops were no longer fresh.

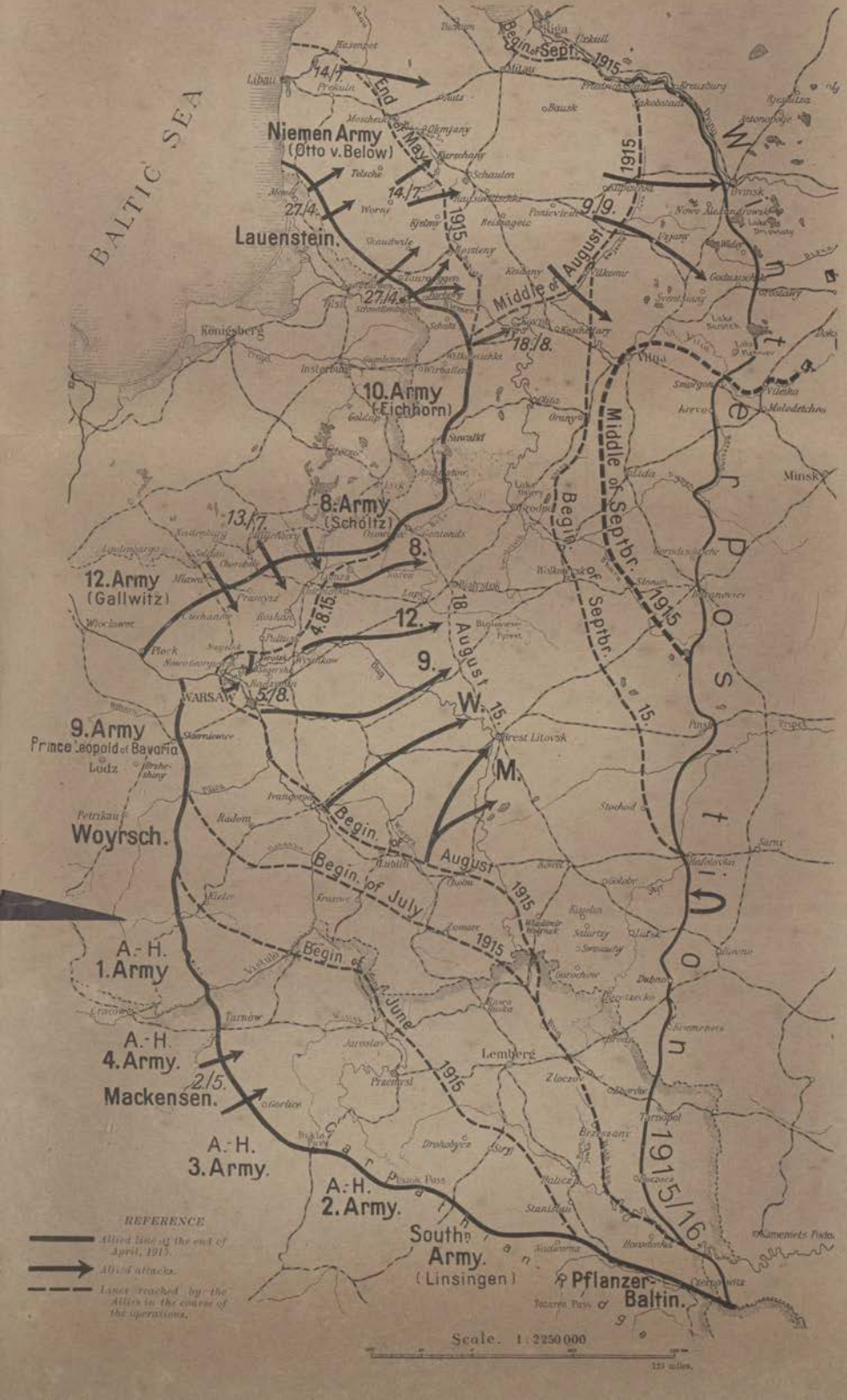
At last, on September 9th, the advance began. The Niemen Army made good progress towards Dvinsk–Jakobstadt. Near Uziany their right wing advanced along the Kovno–Dvinsk road and very soon drove the enemy back beyond Novo Alexandrovsk. The enemy made a stand at both bridgeheads and the fighting here was long and severe.

The left wing of the 10th Army, south of Vilkomir, made good progress on the first two days towards the Vilia above Vilna. Further on, however, they were only able to force the Russians back across this river by degrees.

Between the inner wings of the two armies, from Dvinsk to the Vilia, the cavalry divisions had more room to manœuvre. In the first place they had to fight their way through the lake country between Vilkomir and Sventsiany, which was taken on the 13th. From here the divisions were diverted towards Smorgon, Molodetchno and the Molodetchno–Polotzk railway, half-way between the two places. It was now possible to bring up the cavalry divisions of the 8th Army. The Vilna–Molodetchno–Polotzk railway near Smorgon and Vileika and east of Glubokoie had been reached by the 14th, and the Russian right wing on the Vilia, north-east of Vilna, seriously threatened. The Orsha–Minsk railway was also cut in the neighbourhood of Borissoff. Here, as had so often occurred in the East, the cavalry found a new field for their activities. The German cavalry have everywhere given proof of their brilliant dash and courage.

The 10th Army made many efforts to transfer troops from their front to the left wing. For this purpose they made a detour up the Vilia to Smorgon, and south of Lake Vishniev to Vileika.

THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUSSIA, 1915


BALTIC SEA
Begin. of Sept. 1915
End of May
Niemen Army
(Otto v. Below)
14./7.
27./4.
Lauenstein.
Middle of August 1915
9./9.
18./8.
10. Army
(Eichhorn)
8. Army
(Scholtz)
13./7.
8.
12. Army
(Gallwitz)
4./8./15.
12.
18. August 1915
9.
5./8.
WARSAW
W.
15.
M.
9. Army
Prince Leopold of Bavaria
Lodz
Woyrsch.
Begin. August 1915
Begin. of July 1915
A.-H. 1. Army
Begin. of June 1915
A.-H. 4. Army.
2./5.
Mackensen.
A.-H. 3. Army.
A.-H. 2. Army.
South Army.
(Linsingen)
Pflanzer-Baltin.
Carpathians
Lemberg
Przemysl
Dwinsk
Minsk
Vilna
Grodno
Brest Litovsk
Pinsk
Königsberg
Tilsit
Libau
Mitau
Wilna
Smorgon
Lake Narotch
Lake Wischnew
Lake Driswiaty
Lake Swir
Lake Narotsch
Lake Postawy
Lake Miadel
Lake Wygonowski
Lake Switez
Lake Oginski Canal
Pripet Marshes
Dniester
Tarnopol
Stanislau
Kolomea
Czernowitz
Tarnow
Jaroslau
Radom
Ivangorod
Petrikau
Kielce
Turkheim
Hasenpot
Prekuln
Schaulen
Telsche
Worny
Kybarty
Pilkallen
Gumbinnen
Insterburg
Wirballen
Goldap
Stawiski
Lomza
Ostrolenka
Pultusk
Plock
Wloclawek
Thorn
Strasburg
Jakobstadt
Friedrichstadt
Jacobstadt
Dünaburg
Vilkomir
Swenziany
Godlewo
Oszmiana
Smorgon
Vilkia
Molodetchno
Baranowitschi
Kobrin
Kamenets Podolsk
Zaleszczyki
Chotin
Kuty
Kolomea
Stanislau
Halicz
Dniester
Pruth
Sereth
Zloczow
Brzezany
Tarnopol
Kremenetz
Dubno
Rowno
Lutsk
Kowel
Kiselin
Sarny
Mosyr
Stachod
Pinsk
Jaroslau
Przemysl
Lemberg
Zloczow
Tarnopol
Brzezany
Kremenetz
Dubno
Rowno
Lutsk
Kowel

The movements were difficult to carry out, and took up a great deal of time; they imposed a tremendous strain on the troops, for the roads and weather were bad and hindered progress. The infantry divisions were not able to relieve the cavalry divisions quickly enough in their foremost positions. With their weak artillery they were unable permanently to hold Smorgon. The latter place was recaptured on the 19th by forces from Vilna after a plucky resistance on the part of the 1st Cavalry Division.

The Russians had realized the danger which threatened them, and brought up reinforcements by rail to the region east of Dvinsk; these reinforcements very soon made their appearance to the south of that town. The railway via Polotsk to Molodetchno was not used. From Lida and Slonim, on the other hand, they were able to wheel and effect a wholesale withdrawal in the direction of Molodetchno with their infantry, and towards Dokschitzy with their cavalry. The great Russian frontal retreat out of Poland into West Russia had, unfortunately, progressed so far that their troops which had been brought up north were able to reach the Vilia in time. The German enveloping movement came to a standstill here. Its strength was insufficient to overcome the enemy resistance. The Russians, for their part, crossed the Vilia north of Molodetchno for a counter-attack, but were also unable to get forward. In the meantime the German frontal attack had made but slow progress. The Russians were not able to hold Vilna against this pressure, and retired slowly, fighting along the whole front. The German offensive had still enough impetus to carry it to the region west of Smorgon, the western Beresina and the neighbourhood of Baranovici and Pinsk.

During the gradual advance from Vilna on Smorgon, I saw clearly that the operations would have to be broken off. A continuation of the movement was out of the question. In the long run it was impossible to keep the left wing of the 10th Army so far forward in face of the hostile cavalry, which was pressing in increasing strength upon all sides to oppose our attempt to break through. We had to prepare our winter quarters and

found good positions on the Vishniev–Narotch and Drysviaty Lakes line.

Whilst fresh reinforcements joined the Niemen Army near Lake Drysviaty, the north wing of the 10th Army wheeled back into the positions mentioned above. The 10th Army intended to check the advancing enemy, as had been done in a similar movement near Grodno, but they delayed overlong, and in the end they were severely handled east of Lake Narotch.

The Russian flood surged against our new front, but the tempest gradually died down. Meanwhile the Austrian Army had attempted to execute an enveloping movement by breaking through north-east of Lutsk, but had been repulsed by a counter-attack. Near Dvinsk the fighting continued for a long time. The Niemen Army still hoped to take the bridgehead. But the ammunition supply was so bad that an attack was out of the question, and therefore, at my desire, the battle was broken off.

Quiet reigned along the front as far as the Carpathians.

The summer campaign against Russia was at an end. The Russians had been defeated and their front forced back. The operations round Kovno had not met with any great success, as they started too late. That was the outstanding fact. The enemy had been able to thwart the enveloping movement with which they were threatened on the Vilia. If they had been a few days' march further west they would not have been in a position to do so.

Throughout the whole war we never succeeded, either on the Eastern or Western Front, in exploiting a big strategical break-through to the full. The one between Vilna and Dvinsk was nearest to succeeding. It showed that a strategical break-through only yields its full reward when it is followed up by a tactical envelopment. It was left for the Bulgarian Army in September, 1918, to show to the world the momentous consequences of such an operation. These consequences, however, were possible only because of the utter collapse of that army.

The great anxiety of those September days had once again resulted only in a tactical success. We had had an unusually critical situation to contend with. The action fought by the 1st

Cav. Div. near Smorgon on the enemy's line of retreat was immensely tragic. Just before the arrival of the infantry they were forced to retire with heavy losses. The situation on the south wing of the Niemen Army also continued to be precarious, and the rearward movement of the 10th Army extremely dangerous. All this, however, was nothing to the nerve-racking suspense; could the infantry get forward fast enough on the bad roads to complete the envelopment which had been so skilfully begun by the cavalry division? Such suspense can only be understood by those who have actually experienced it.

We had taken a further and great step towards the final overthrow of Russia. The Grand Duke, with his strong personality, resigned, and the Tsar placed himself at the head of the army.

Our troops and their leaders had done their duty everywhere, and the German soldier was justly convinced of his unquestionable superiority over the Russian. Numbers no longer had any terrors for him.

THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN THE EAST AT KOVNO, OCTOBER, 1915, TO JULY, 1916

THE PERIOD OF INACTIVITY

I

AFTER the cessation of the fighting to the north of Arras in May, quiet reigned everywhere on the Western Front throughout the summer of 1915. At the end of September the Entente started a powerful offensive near Loos and in Champagne. The troops which had been transferred from the East arrived just in time to support the defenders of the Western Front, who were holding out so gallantly, and avert a serious defeat.

The Italians had attacked repeatedly, but without success. The Austrian Army fought well against Italy; she was their hereditary foe, whereas the war against Russia aroused no national prejudices.

The German and Austrian General Staffs had decided upon the conquest of Serbia. Bulgaria, a natural enemy of Serbia, and smarting under the loss of Macedonia, declared herself openly on our side. The taking of Warsaw had made a particularly strong impression on her. The Bulgarian contribution of twelve strong infantry divisions at once equalized the forces in the Balkans. Field-Marshal von Mackensen crossed the Danube at the beginning of October. By the beginning of December the Serbian campaign had brought us close to the Greek frontier. Consideration for Greece, the fatigue of the troops, and the state of our communi-

cations, perhaps also other political and military circumstances, unknown to me, prevented us from completing our operations with an attack on Salonica, where the first Entente troops were arriving to join in the fighting. The capture of Salonica would have

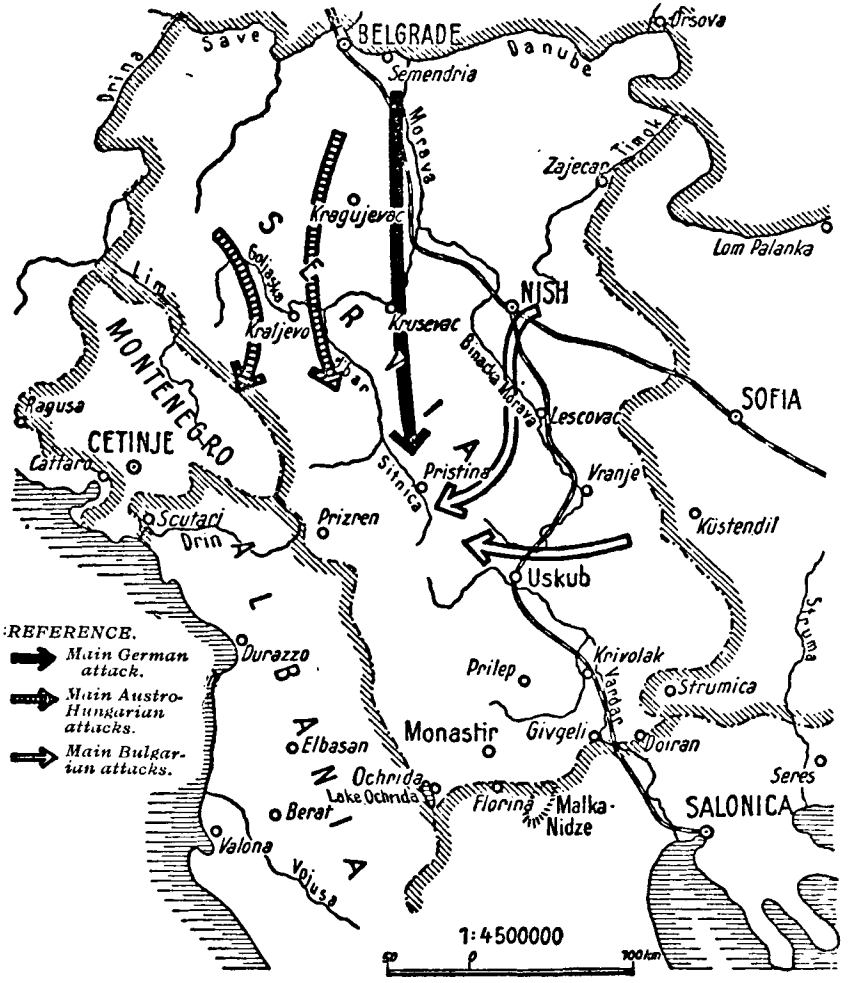


Fig. 5. The Campaign in Servia, 1915.

considerably relieved our position in the Balkan Peninsula. It is clear to me, in the light of subsequent experience, that by such an operation we should not have gained even one Bulgarian for the Western Front. The English, French and Serbians who

afterwards occupied the Macedonian front would probably have fought against us in France. This consideration continued to weigh with us. The attack on Salonica was always a side-show, and must be regarded as such.

The Austrian troops pushed forward through Montenegro as far as the Vojusa in Albania, where the fighting lasted until February. The troops covering the flank of the Austro-Hungarian Army had advanced from the Danube far into Albania, even to the Greek frontier. The protection of this front was entrusted to Bulgarian troops, not only in their own interest, but also in that of Austria-Hungary and ourselves.

Most of the German troops returned by degrees to the Danube. Austria-Hungary also had fresh troops at her disposal. The Serbian Army was severely defeated, though remnants of it escaped in the direction of Valona, and, owing to the high-handed action of France and England at Corfu, became once more a factor in the struggle to be feared by the Bulgarian soldier. They were transferred subsequently to Salonica, where they fought very creditably.

The Entente found themselves forced to release troops for Macedonia from other theatres of war. They also had to abandon the idea of continuing the Gallipoli operations, which, thanks to German energy and the Mediterranean Division, had cost them very dearly. The position of the expeditionary force had now become too dangerous. Communication with Turkey was established by the defeat of Serbia and the alliance with Bulgaria. We were no longer obliged to smuggle our war material through Roumania; it was possible to give Turkey direct assistance. The railway running to Constantinople was opened on January 16th. On January 8th and 9th the Entente troops evacuated the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The blockade of the Straits was assured. If the enemy fleets, by occupying the Straits, had commanded the Black Sea, Russia could have been supplied with the war materials of which she stood in such need. The fighting in the East would then have assumed a much more serious character. The Entente would have had access to the rich corn supplies of South Russia and

Rumania, and would have persuaded this kingdom to yield to their wishes even sooner than she actually did. Russia's communications with the outside world for the transport of war materials were, at that time, via the Trans-Siberian railways, along the Murman coast, to which the railway from Petrograd was still under construction, and far from completion, and, in summer, by the White Sea. The traffic through Finland with Sweden was important, but the latter would not permit the transport of war material. Sweden interpreted the duties of a neutral State correctly. These details clearly show the importance of the Straits, and therefore of Turkey, for the Eastern Front, and our whole military position.

Military operations in Asia Minor were a difficult matter. Turkey was entirely dependent on communications by road, whereas modern warfare requires communications either by rail or sea. The railway to the Caucasus had only just been begun between Angora and Sivas. The Bagdad railway, broken by the mountain chains of Taurus and Amanus, had not nearly reached the Tigris. Tunnels were in course of construction. The railway to Syria joined the Bagdad railway at Aleppo, that is, beyond the intervening mountain barrier. South of Damascus it gave place to the narrow-gauge Hedjaz railway, with a branch line which traversed Palestine and came to an end at Beersheba, south of Jerusalem.

The state of the railways, which were bad enough in themselves, was made still worse by the conditions under which they were worked, for as regards both personnel and materials things could not have been worse. The railways served very little purpose, and did not in any way meet the necessities of the situation.

Endeavours were made, with some success, to use the Euphrates and the Tigris; but this made little difference to the general situation.

German motor transport helped to improve matters.

Owing to the difficulties of communication, a campaign in Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia was doomed to failure so long as transport conditions were not improved.

The military efficiency of the Turks in their frontier provinces was still further limited by the fact that the Kurds and Armenians on the Caucasus frontier and the Arab tribes in Mesopotamia and Syria as far as Aden were hostile to them. The Turks have always pursued an unhappy policy in regard to native populations. They have gone on the principle of taking everything and giving nothing. Now they had to reckon with these peoples as their enemies. By their unpardonable treatment of the Armenians the Turks deprived themselves even of labour, which they needed urgently, both for the building of railways and agriculture.

The Turkish efforts to summon Tripoli and Benghasi to a Holy War were only partially successful. Our U boats brought them arms, and to a certain extent maintained communication between those districts and Turkey.

An expedition against the Suez Canal in January–February, 1915, was defeated. It could only have been successful if, at the same time, the Senussi had invaded Egypt from the west and the Egyptians themselves had risen. But these were Utopian ideas; English sovereignty is firmly established in those provinces which are in her power.

At the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris, England, with her maritime communications, advanced step by step towards Bagdad. It had been impossible for the Turks to prevent this. In December, 1915, fighting again took place round Kut-el-Amara below Bagdad, to which the English Expeditionary Force was, by this time, alarmingly close.

The Turkish Army on the Caucasus frontier had been defeated in the winter of 1914–15. They had been marking time since then. Nevertheless they had suffered a high rate of wastage, chiefly owing to typhus and frost-bite.

The events in the Sinai Peninsula and Mesopotamia did not directly affect the Eastern Front. The Suez Expedition was followed with great interest and many hopes. The difficulties of communication, of which I have given a short description, were not fully realized by me at that time. In particular I was under the impression that the Bagdad railway was better and

further advanced than was actually the fact. Whether more could have been done here I was not able to ascertain.

The fighting on the Caucasian front did not bring us the relief we had hoped for, as regards Russia.

Owing to the occupation of vast regions in the East, the opening of the Balkan Peninsula and our through communications with Turkey, our economic situation had greatly improved. Rumania had become much more accommodating as regards the delivery of supplies, as she was unable to dispose of her materials elsewhere. The year 1915 ended with a distinct advantage to us. We had strengthened our position for the coming year, but we did not by a long way get everything we could or ought to have expected from the home country.

Our enemies continued to increase their armaments.

In England Kitchener's Army was developing. The greater part of it had, by this time, arrived on the Western Front. The English front had extended southwards and released French troops. Further divisions were being formed in England. Conscription had taken the place of voluntary recruiting. The English Conscription Bill was passed in Parliament in January, 1916. Thus England, the last European power to do so, accepted the standpoint of the universal obligation of every able-bodied man to serve the State under arms, when required to do so by the necessities of war and the duties of citizenship. England did not extend the law to Ireland; a characteristic touch.

The French Army had kept up its original strength. The Serbian Army was being reorganized. Russia, to make good her losses, had made great inroads on her vast man-power.

The transformation of the peace-time industries of France, England, Japan and America had made decided progress.

The year 1916 was certain to witness some terrific fighting.

In this great drama of historical events operations on the front of the C. in C. in the East, which since November 1914, had been an important and frequently the decisive theatre, receded into the background. The work we now had to do was of a less active kind.

II

At the close of the great operations the circumstances under which the Eastern armies were living were makeshift and unsatisfactory in every respect ; further, conditions, in the territory we had occupied in the course of events, had to be reorganized.

In order to get a better grasp of affairs and be in closer touch with the troops, we went to Kovno at the end of October.

The Field-Marshal, the officers of the General Staff and I were quartered in two villas belonging to Herr Tillmann, a German whose family name was in good repute among the Germans in Russia. He himself had been in Germany from the beginning of the war. The Field-Marshal, Colonel Hoffmann and myself lived together in one of the villas. Here also was our small Staff mess. I have spent many hours in this house and it is indelibly engraved on my memory.

The offices of the General Staff were in the administrative building of the Military Government. The sixpenny portraits of the Tsar, the Tsarina and the Tsarevitsch were typical of the Russian culture of that time. The rooms were large and suitable for our purpose, and could be well heated for the coming winter.

Kovno is a typical Russian town, with low, mean, wooden houses and comparatively wide streets. From the hills which closely encircle the town there is an interesting view of the town and the confluence of the Niemen and the Vilia. On the further bank of the Niemen there stands the tower of an old German castle of the Teutonic Knights, a symbol of German civilization in the East, and not far from it there is a memorial of French schemes for the conquest of the world : that hill upon which Napoleon stood in 1812 as he watched the Grand Army crossing the river.

My mind was flooded with overwhelming historical memories : I determined to resume in the occupied territory that work of civilization at which the Germans had laboured in those lands

for many centuries. The population, made up as it is of such a mixture of races, has never produced a culture of its own and, left to itself, would succumb to Polish domination.

I was proud to think that, over a hundred years ago, after a period of great weakness and tribulation in Germany, we had thrown off the foreign yoke. Now that same Germany, first beaten by Napoleon because she was decadent and subsequently united by the efforts of a few great men, stood victorious in this world-war against enemies who far outnumbered her and added fresh glories to her record. I had faith in final victory. Nothing else was possible. The German people had been through too much already to expose themselves again to such a terrible fate. The men who were leading Germany only needed to develop her latent powers, to add fuel to the holy fire burning—as I then thought—in every German heart.

A happy future of assured prosperity seemed to be opening out for the Fatherland.

Our work, of course, was not interrupted for a single day by the migration from Lötzen to Kovno. The necessary telephone connections were quickly made in the office, and the bare necessities in the way of furniture were improved upon. That this additional furniture was taken from other houses, which had been deserted by the inhabitants, could not be helped. It was done in as orderly a manner as possible, but a certain amount of confusion was inevitable. These are the regrettable conditions imposed by the exigencies of war. The belligerents or individual soldiers are not to be blamed for this. Circumstances are too strong for them. To the individual civilian who suffers it is a matter of indifference *how* he loses his property. He understands nothing of the necessities of war, and therefore is ready enough to talk about the enemy's barbaric methods of warfare.

We found plenty of furniture at Kovno, but later, when we got to Brest-Litovsk, we were confronted by empty barracks. We therefore had furniture sent on to us from Kovno and requisitioned some from other places as well. War, alas, is a rough trade.

In this town I usually attended the evangelical services which Pastor Wessel held in the former Orthodox church, a magnificent

building, typical of the Russian despotic rule in that country. There I heard for the first time on foreign soil the beautiful old melody sung as a hymn:

I have given myself
With heart and with hand,
To thee, land of love and life,
My German Fatherland.*

I was deeply moved. This hymn ought to be sung every Sunday in all the churches, and should be engraved on the hearts of all Germans.

III

The first task before us was to consolidate our front and endeavour to improve the living conditions for the armies. On our right wing Prince Leopold of Bavaria's Army Group was occupying the sector south of the Niemen as far as south of Pinsk. This Army Group and the C. in C. in the East himself were under our G.H.Q. To the south these troops linked up with the front line of the Austrian Army (with its G.H.Q. at Teschen), which had Linsingen's Army Group on its left wing and its right close to the Rumanian frontier.

In the sphere of command of the C. in C. in the East the line of the 12th and 8th Armies had been so shortened that there was only room for one of them. The 12th remained where it was; it extended from the Niemen to beyond the Lida–Molodetchno railway. General von Gallwitz had given up the command and taken over the command of an army against Serbia. His place with the 12th Army had been taken by General von Fabeck, who had come from the Western Front.

*"Ich hab' mich ergeben
mit Herz und mit Hand,
Dir Land voll Lieb' und Leben,
mein deutsches Vaterland."

The 10th Army extended to the north as far as the Disna. Further north again, the Scholtz Army Group had been formed under the general of that name, who had commanded the 8th Army. The left wing of the 10th Army was on the banks of the Dvina, about half-way between Dvinsk and Jakobstadt.

The northern part of the front and the coast defences were under General von Below. The Niemen Army, no longer entitled to that name, became the 8th Army. Such a change of name is not so simple as it looks on paper. A variety of measures have to be taken to avoid present and future possibility of confusion.

The Navy had taken up quarters in the naval port of Libau. The sphere of its command there had to be specially provided for.

Certain subordinate formations had to be fitted into this scheme for holding the front. A number of rearrangements on a large scale were necessary. Where the main offensives had taken place there was a congestion of troops. At other points the line was too thin. A proper balance had to be struck. Cavalry divisions had to be relieved by infantry divisions. It was a long time before these movements were completed and the troops arrived at positions where they could be left for the time being. But there could not be any question as yet of real rest. The line had to be consolidated, and meanwhile other troops had to hold long stretches of front. Both these tasks taxed the strength of the men. The positions to be strengthened were generally those where the fighting had been fiercest. Points which it was impossible to hold were to be abandoned, but both commanders and troops resigned themselves to this course with great reluctance.

Between Vishniev and the Disna, the line to which the left wing of the 10th Army had withdrawn, it was easier to select positions.

The construction of trenches and billets, and indeed conditions at the front as a whole, suffered from the bad railway connections. The Russians had everywhere completely destroyed the railways. The bridges over the Niemen and other large rivers had all been

blown up, the railway stations burnt, the water supplies destroyed and the telegraph wires broken down. The railways had been torn up in places, and the sleepers and rails removed. The military railway authorities, with their labour and engineer companies, and the telegraphists for the extremely important work of re-establishing the telegraph, had a colossal task before them. The Director of Railways in the East knew his job.

The completion of the railway bridge near Kovno was of the greatest importance. It was possible to use it by the end of September, and for a long time it was the only channel for supplies to the 10th and 12th Armies and the right wing of Scholtz's Army Group. At that time I was satisfied if I could count on two trains a day to Lida for the 12th Army, but, as it turned out, it was anything but easy to obtain the trains which the army required. Conditions on the railways at home were very bad. On one occasion the 12th Army had urgently requested a train-load of fodder and received a train-load of seltzer-water! That is a trifle during a great war; but the well-being of man and horse is dependent on a series of trifles, and so the latter assume a great and disproportionate importance.

The northern network of railways joined the Memel line at Prekuln. The Russian railways in Lithuania and Courland had a surprisingly small capacity, even in peace time. This would not have been the case if Russia had really needed the ports of Windau and Libau for her economic existence.

The Prekuln–Memel line, moreover, was behind the times. It was a long time before any sort of regular service of three or four trains could be established on the line from Ponieviesh to Dvinsk.

On the long stretches from Vilna to Smorgon and Vilna to Dvina conditions were not so difficult, but even here the improvised water-tanks froze in winter and there were all sorts of obstacles, surmountable and insurmountable.

The branch line Ponieviesh–Uzjany–Sventziany had hardly been damaged, but it was quite inadequate.

It was long after Christmas before traffic was made safe

and comparatively regular on all the lines, so that at last the longed-for leave trains could be put on.

And then a peculiarly critical situation arose. After a spell of intense cold the ice on the Niemen and Windau began to break up. The masses of ice swept away the bridge across the Windau at Moscheiki. The sole means of communication with Germany by rail was thus broken. The floating ice dashed against the railway bridge at Kovno and displaced the rails, but the bridge stood firm. Once more we passed through a period of great anxiety, although for a different reason. If this bridge had also been destroyed the armies would have been in a critical position.

By degrees the other bridges across the Niemen were completed. The extension of the railways progressed; traffic became regular and conditions on the Eastern Front were regulated more satisfactorily. The new lines, the Tauroggen–Radsiwilischki and Shavli–Mitau sections were completed in May and August, 1916, the line from Sventziany towards Lake Narotch not until later.

The two former railways have opened up the country and facilitated the work of civilization. These districts owe us much for that.

Behind the front there arose a system of light railways, connecting up with this network of lines, for the direct supply of the troops.

The roads in the districts occupied by the troops continued to be of great importance. The great main roads from Grodno to Lida, Kovno to Dvinsk and Tauroggen to Mitau were put into excellent repair. The other roads were repaired as far as possible. At the season when the snow was melting they were transformed in places into a slough in which horses were drowned if they happened to fall.

As the work on the railways and roads progressed the consolidation of the front also went forward. The troops cut wood for themselves, and some of the barbed wire was manufactured on the spot. The proximity of underground water made the construction of trenches peculiarly difficult. The geologists rendered good service to the troops in this connection.

Behind the front arose workshops for the repair of all kinds of war material. The numerous captured Russian machine-guns were altered to suit German ammunition in a specially erected factory.

Of course I did not deal with these matters in detail, and confined myself to stimulating and organizing activities.

I was particularly concerned about the shelter and feeding of the men and the horses.

The quarters were, in themselves, not so bad. The war had passed comparatively rapidly over the region which we finally occupied, and therefore had not been very destructive. Nor had the Russians burned down everything as they did further south in Poland. All the same there remained a great deal of work to be done in the construction of billets for the troops, especially close behind the line. The dug-outs, which took a long time to build, were made as habitable as possible by the troops. But only those who have been through it can know with how little officers and men had to be satisfied, and were satisfied.

Hutments for men and horses had to be built further behind the line. The troops became great experts at this work. Their artistic sense was displayed in decorative embellishments of birch-wood.

Generally speaking, the provisioning of the troops proceeded pretty regularly. Rations were sometimes short with some of the troops, especially potatoes. There was not enough fodder for the horses. There were no oats, and green fodder was too scarce to be supplied in sufficient quantities. Many horses died of exhaustion. In the end we had to add sawdust to their food.

It needed special care to prevent the supplies which had been brought up at such pains from going bad at the railway stations. Of course there were no sheds or tents there. I had to see to this also. Goodwill was universal, but the difficulties accumulated until they took the heart out of many. In dealing with the Christmas parcels there were similar difficulties to be overcome.

The health of men and horses had my special attention. I went into both these subjects in detail with the officers responsible

for them, Surgeon-General von Kern and Chief Veterinary-Surgeon Grammlich.

It had been difficult to look after the wounded during the advance, but conditions had now become somewhat easier. There still remained, however, a great deal to be done by the responsible authorities. The few hospitals which we found in the occupied territory were hardly worth considering. I urged that as many wounded as possible should be sent home, but I had to be very patient. Later on, cases of slight illness or wounds were not sent home but retained in the occupied territory, where, during convalescence, they were given light duty. We were spared the epidemics to which armies are liable; only spotted fever occurred from time to time for a short period. As regards measures against vermin, very thorough precautions had been taken at the frontier to prevent the troops from going home infected. Thanks to the energy of Surgeon-General von Kern and the conscientiousness of the army doctors the whole medical service was in perfect order. Herr von Kern is a philosopher, and this would appear to show that philosophers can also be men of action.

The horses suffered from glanders and mange. We mastered the glanders by means of blood-tests, but not the mange, and this did extensive mischief. Many remedies were tried, but an effective one was not discovered until the war was almost at an end. Veterinary hospitals were erected in large numbers, and the officers of this service had plenty to do. Their devotion was rewarded by great successes.

The supplies and accommodation for the horses were not always all they should have been. I often represented to the Army Headquarters Staffs that they should devote more care and attention to their horses.

The replacement of clothing, the provision of winter clothing and woollen wear, and the delivery of pit-props for the trenches were beset with many difficulties; I had to bring all my energies to bear.

Leave was begun as soon as possible. It was granted more and more freely as the situation on the railways improved.

I went into the question of the speedy delivery of letters and newspapers ; I was most anxious that the men should be as closely in touch with home as possible, and I was able to help in that direction. At the beginning of the war the military postal authorities were faced with an insoluble problem. They had not sufficient motor-lorries. But under the Military Postmaster Domizlaff they soon got to work, and were able to meet the heavy demands on their resources.

Behind the front and in the large towns soldiers' and officers' clubs were established from time to time ; we could not have enough of these. The soldiers' clubs in the East met a deeply-felt need ; this was shown by the numbers who frequented them. The people at home gave me real assistance, and the women who came out to the soldiers' clubs did good work.

The Field-Marshal and I were gratified when, through the agency of Pastor Hoppe, some friends offered to equip certain field libraries for the use of the troops. Providing for the intellectual needs of the troops was a labour of love, and we eagerly accepted this offer. Pastor Hoppe took the matter in hand and carried it through energetically. On my birthday in 1917 he handed me a considerable sum for the same purpose with these heartfelt words : " Der Geist schafft Waffen und Sieg."* I hope these field libraries were useful to the troops. They could not, of course, entirely satisfy their demand for books ; field bookshops were set up in great numbers. These were handed over to the management of Messrs. Stilke, who were to co-operate with other firms. They served the troops well. The military bookshops also stocked newspapers of every political complexion.

The armies produced their own local newspapers. I arranged for them to have a good news service.

The getting up of concerts, theatres and cinema shows was in the hands of the army authorities, and was encouraged by us.

In view of the enormous demands that the High Command in the East had been obliged to make on the troops it was a real pleasure to do everything I could for them, and my colleagues helped me most effectively in this work.

* " The spirit creates weapons and brings victory."

The military efficiency of the troops was not neglected. Training was promoted as far as possible, although schools could not be established on the same scale as they were in the West.

The Niemen fortresses, Grodno and Kovno, as also Libau, were strengthened, and the former frontier lines maintained. They formed reserve positions. The labour available did not allow of any further measures. My ordinary duties in looking after the various armies were very considerably increased by the demands made by the military and home authorities in the occupied territories—not to speak of my duty to take care of the local population. I cheerfully undertook all these fresh duties and firmly resolved to make a good job of them.

IV

The country was in a devastated condition owing to the war, and order prevailed only where we had been in occupation for some time. Some of the inhabitants had deliberately left before the retreating Russians; others had been taken with them. Numbers of these had hidden themselves in the depths of the forests and now returned home. Many properties, however, remained unoccupied. The harvest had not been reaped, and it was impossible to imagine how cultivation was to be continued There was no supreme authority. The Russian government officials, judges, administrative authorities, and nearly all secret intelligence agents had left the country. There were neither *gendarmerie* nor police, and the priests alone possessed a certain amount of influence. This denuded country had to live somehow. At the very outset of our occupation of Vilna, Kovno and Grodno, serious difficulties arose in connection with the feeding of the population, and these difficulties threatened to increase and spread to other towns. There was also a shortage of wood for fuel.

The population, apart from the German portion, held aloof from us. Those in the German districts, especially the Balts, had welcomed our troops. The Letts were opportunists, and awaited events. The Lithuanians believed the hour of deliverance was

at hand, and when the good times they anticipated did not materialize, owing to the cruel exigencies of war, they became suspicious once more, and turned against us. The Poles were hostile as they feared, quite justifiably, a pro-Lithuanian policy on our part. The White Ruthenians were of no account, as the Poles had robbed them of their nationality and given nothing in return. In the autumn of 1915 I thought I would like to obtain some idea of the distribution of this race. At first they were, literally, not to be found. Subsequently we discovered they were a widely-scattered people, apparently of Polish origin, but with such a low standard of civilization that it would be a long time before we could do anything for them. The Jew did not know what attitude to adopt, but he gave us no trouble, and we were at least able to converse with him, which was hardly ever possible with the Poles, Lithuanians and Letts. The language difficulties weighed heavily against us, and cannot be over-estimated. Owing to the dearth of German works of reference on the subject, we knew very little about the country or the people, and found ourselves in a strange world.

In a region as large as East and West Prussia, Pomerania and Posen together, we were faced with an appalling task. We had to construct and organize everything afresh. The first thing to be done was to secure peace and order behind the army and put an end to espionage. The country had to be made self-supporting, so that it might supply the army and our people at home. It had also to contribute to the equipment of troops and our requirements in war material. Our economic conditions, due to the enemy blockade, made this course an imperative duty.

Agriculture had to be taken in hand as soon as possible. The time for the solution of political problems had not yet arrived These matters were handed over to the Inspectors of the Lines-of-Communication, who were primarily concerned with the administration of the occupied territories.

Keeping order in the country was a military duty of the L. of C. Commandants. The lines-of-communication troops were at their disposal for this purpose, and they had the assistance of the military police in the work of counter-espionage.

The Inspectors of the Lines-of-Communication were supplied with special staffs for the administration of the country. These were under a chief administrator, who had special powers and a heavy responsibility to his L. of C. Inspector.

The Commandants on the Lines-of-Communication and the administrative bodies were subordinate to the authority of the Inspectors. There were, of course, possibilities of friction, and therefore, among Germans, friction was bound to arise. However, thanks to our excellent Inspectors, all these difficulties were eventually overcome. Generals von Harbou, Madlung and Freiherr von Seckendorff proved themselves efficient administrators.

In the area under the control of the Commander-in-Chief in the East administrative and economic questions were studied and dealt with by a special department. There was no room for a General-Government, quite apart from the fact that it would have been a useless piece of machinery. The armies required their own lines-of-communication areas. The Quartermaster-General was busy in the West and unable to give sufficient attention to affairs in the East. The C. in C. there had to manage by himself. The Inspectors were responsible for the execution of any order issued by him, in addition to their many special duties.

Owing to the absence of any home administrative or legal machinery, our administration had a character of its own, which enabled it to withstand the storms of the revolution in November, 1918.

V

I can only give a brief description of the administrative work of the C. in C. in the East, but I do it gladly, for I owe as many thanks to my assistants in this field of labour as to those who helped me on the purely military side. What we accomplished together before my departure at the end of July, 1916, was admirable in every respect, and worthy of the German character. It benefited the army and Germany as well as the country and its inbabitants.

I required many colleagues in this responsible undertaking. They were not all appointed at once, but only as occasion and necessity demanded. By the side of my military staff there gradually arose an extensive administrative staff under the Deputy Chief of Staff, General von Eisenhart-Rothe, a man of wide experience in economic problems. He served me and our cause with a devotion and enthusiasm which were infectious. As Intendant-General, he was of the utmost assistance to me later on.

At the end of October the first thing to be done was to introduce our administration into the newly-occupied portions of the Lines-of-Communication area, as had already been done in the western portions. A belt along the whole front remained the Operations Zone, under the direct control of the Army Commands. The various Lines-of-Communication areas had each adopted different methods, but uniformity was imperative, as otherwise it would be very difficult to supervise the administrative machinery. This had to be done with tact and caution, or we should do more harm than good.

In view of the magnitude of the task, and the wide region to be administered, a large *personnel* was necessary, in spite of all efforts to be as economical as possible. Although I hold the view that it is not numbers that matter, but the quality of the individual, this principle is necessarily subject to limitations. I could not carry on without a certain staff, and no organization could have done with less than mine. The individual standard of achievement was always high. We could not have dispensed with a single man.

I was careful that the military character of our administration, since nothing else was possible within the framework of the Inspectorates, should be maintained, and, above all, that those should be selected who were no longer fit for service at the front. But I also used civilians. My chief preoccupation was to obtain men with technical training, for I am not one of those who believe that the majority of men are capable of holding any post. I have often observed how even a little technical knowledge lightens the work to the advantage of everybody. For purely

administrative posts I was compelled to take men without technical experience. A resolute will, general experience and sound knowledge of men had to make up for what was lacking. For agriculture, forestry, law, finance, ecclesiastical and educational affairs, experts were absolutely necessary. The extraordinary demands on the man-power of the nation for the Army and home services made it at first difficult to obtain the necessary men. Later on, when the administration of the Commander-in-Chief in the East attained a certain reputation, it was an easier matter. We used to make searching inquiries about all candidates at the employment bureaux at home. The subordinate posts were filled by the various administrations and Lines of Communication Inspectorates in the same way. I insisted upon having reliable men in this foreign land. Natives were only employed in Courland, and then sparingly.

Everybody co-operated zealously with me in this strenuous undertaking. We were governing a country, the conditions of which were absolutely unknown to us, which had been devastated by war, and in which all political and economic bonds had been severed. We were among a foreign population, consisting of many different, rival races, a population that did not speak our tongue and was, generally speaking, secretly hostile. All of us were animated by the spirit of faithful and self-sacrificing devotion to duty, the heritage of many centuries of Prussian discipline and tradition.

As I became better acquainted with the country, I realized that some measures could not be carried through, but would have to be modified. Here and there we might have done more and done it better ; that goes without saying. But my duty was to act promptly and decisively in these unfamiliar conditions. In particular, any omission in matters economical was more serious than a mistake which could be rectified later. Only after we had got to work on the problem was I able to see my way clearly. I should have been more cautious had I been dealing with a political problem, but I was not concerned with that yet.

VI

The territory administered by the Commander-in-Chief in the East stretched southwards to parts of the Lines-of-Communication area of the Army Group under Field-Marshal Prince Leopold. These had formerly been the areas through which the 12th Army advanced and subsequently had its lines of communication. The Forest of Bialoviesa also came under the administration of the Commander-in-Chief in the East. Its organization followed the changes in the L. of C. areas, and the two developed side by side. Up to the end of 1915 and 1916 the following administrative provinces had been created: Courland, Lithuania, Suwalki, Vilna, Grodno and Bialystok. This arrangement was changed later. Suwalki and Vilna were combined to form the administrative province of Vilna. At my desire, on my departure in July, 1916, the provinces of Vilna and Lithuania were combined under the administration of Lithuania. In the first instance, Grodno was joined to Bialystok and in the autumn of 1917 all this enlarged district was incorporated in Lithuania.

The Chief Administrators of Courland and Lithuania have attracted much public attention.

Major von Gossler administered Courland in an unobtrusive and impartial manner. He was a member of the Reichstag, a lord of the manor and an ex-Landrat. Since 1905 the Balts had been very embittered against the Letts. He understood not only how to make the former more conciliatory, but also how to win the sympathy of the latter and gain their active co-operation. In Courland they still speak with gratitude and appreciation of his just and far-seeing administration.

Lieut.-Colonel Prince von Isenburg, in Lithuania, was more impulsive, perhaps too much so. He was an energetic man who managed his family estates admirably. My attention was first drawn to him in occupied Poland, where he had taken a

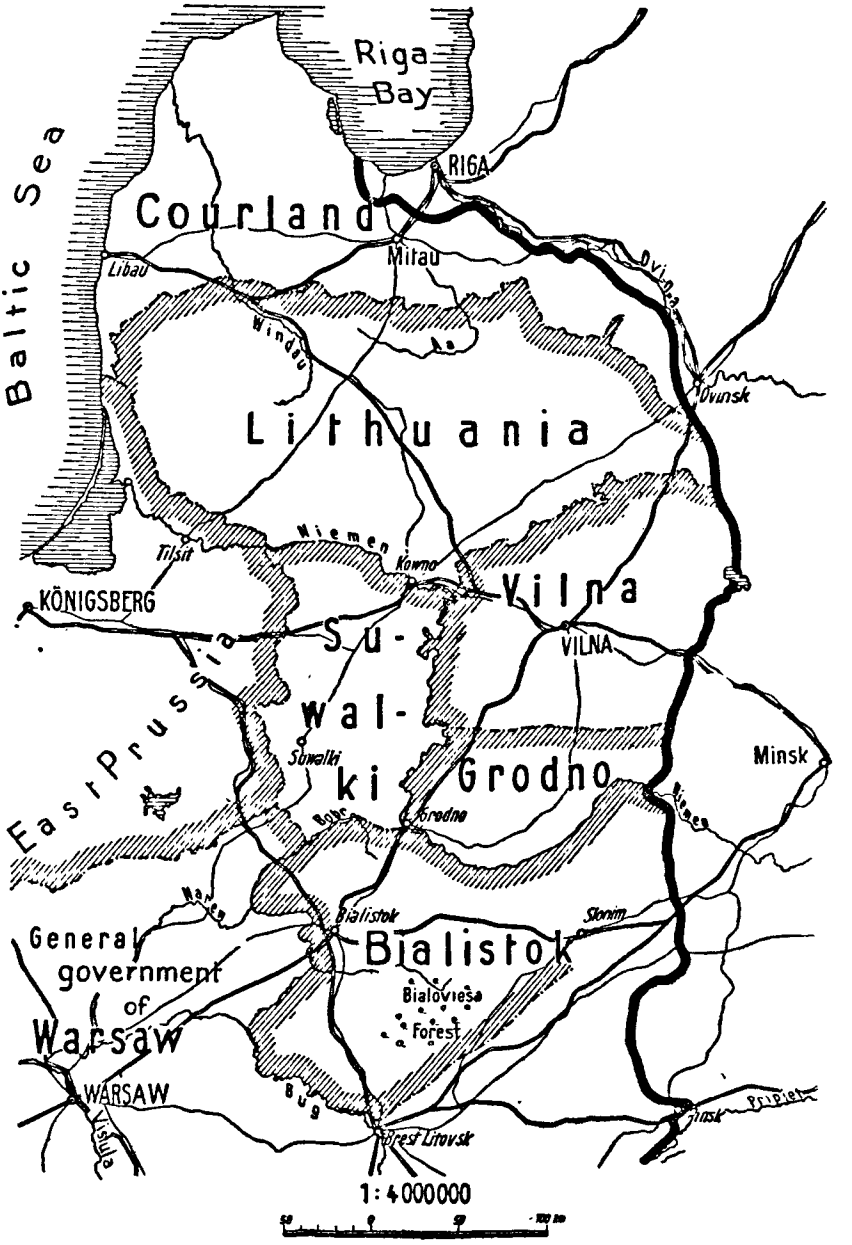


Fig. 6. Administrative Area under the Commander-in-Chief in the East.

useful part in the administration. The Lieutenant-Colonel later fell a victim to politics.

So long as I remained in Kovno politics played no part in the administration. Prince von Isenberg had full opportunity of interesting himself in the affairs of the other districts, and enlisting the sympathies of the population and clergy of the small province then under his control.

I am sorry I cannot give the names of various other deserving administrators. The personality of the Lines-of-Communication Inspector, General Freiherr von Seckendorff, made itself felt, particularly in the province of Bialystok. He gave his administration a character of its own. Nowhere else did the Lines-of-Communication and District Commandants work so well together and with so little friction from the start.

The chief administrators were responsible to the L. of C. Inspectors and the Commander-in-Chief in the East in all respects, for the administration of the country. They had a body of officials under them corresponding to the economic section of my staff.

The administrative provinces were divided into districts, often as large as a lines-of-communication area in the West. The onus of the administrative work, as regards its economic and agricultural aspects, lay on the District Commandant. He had nothing to do with the judicial system, which was parallel to his own. The District Commandants ranked with Town Commandants of the larger towns.

Subordinated to the District Commandants were the Mayors of the small towns and the Area Presidents in the country, and under the latter were the Village Presidents. Attached to the District Commandants for the economic exploitation of the country were specialist agricultural officers, whose duty was to supervise cultivation and estate management, and to take steps for increasing production and utilizing the harvest. Other officials assisted the Commandants in producing all kinds of raw material required for war purposes.

The uniform system of administration outlined above was only gradually introduced into the different provinces in accordance with an administrative decree of the 7th of June, 1916.

The District Commandants had a body of gendarmerie for their police force. In the provinces they were formed into special gendarmerie detachments, and in the district under the Commander-in-Chief in the East they were formed into a corps. I deeply regretted the lack of German police forces. Germany could not spare sufficient gendarmes, and I was therefore compelled to commandeer older men from the front. They received special instructions to fit them in some measure for their duties. Colonel Rochus Schmidt, a particularly careful officer, and I would gladly have found some better arrangement, but the whole thing was a makeshift. Unfortunately individual gendarmes may have added to the discontent which showed itself later. How could they be expected to give satisfaction and accomplish anything in a strange land, among a hostile population, and with no sufficient knowledge of the language? This one question will illustrate the difficulties which Germans in a foreign land had to encounter. Dishonesty and profiteering are absolutely inexcusable. The loyalty of the gendarmes brought them into conflict with the numerous armed bands, and many of them lost their lives. This must never be forgotten.

The government of the country included the administration of justice which was so arranged as to fit in with the district organization. In each district there was a district court for the local population; we had to create them, as there were none. The provincial courts were set up as a kind of higher court, perhaps unnecessarily.

The High Court in Kovno, under President Kratzenberg, was the final court of appeal. As chief of the Department of Justice, he had to take considerable part in its administrative business.

The functions of the Lines-of-Communication tribunals were in no way restricted by these District Courts. The courts worked well, both together and independently.

The forestry service in the various provinces was outside the district organization. Inspectorates were created according to the forest areas, of which that at Bialoviesa became the best known.

VII

Vitality had to be infused into this administrative system, if it was to accomplish useful work. It must not become bureaucratic, but must adapt itself to the needs of the situation. "Precedent," that grave-digger of independent judgment, could not apply here, thank God!

I had the services of Captains von Brockhusen and Freiherr von Gayl, of the Reserve, in the whole business of building up the administrative system. Prior to the war the former had been a *Landrat*, and the latter director of the East Prussian Land Company at Königsberg. We produced a sound organization, well fitted to cope with the heavy demands made upon it.

We gave special attention to the health of the population. We triumphed over spotted fever which was rampant in many places. It involved heavy sacrifices in doctors.

To pacify the population and give material relief to the country, we made a beginning with the redemption of requisition notes issued by the troops during operations. It was a difficult and complicated matter to carry through. From now on we paid for everything in cash. I wanted in that way to help the country and increase its productivity; in my view a very important matter.

It was necessary for us to obtain control of the products of the soil, and to ensure the proper management of agriculture and full exploitation of the land. This was all the more difficult, because the population was so small. For example, the district of Bauske only numbered four inhabitants to the square kilometre.

In our anxiety to help the home country, and indeed under pressure, we attempted too much in the way of cultivation. We interested German companies in the business, in the hope of their being able, with the means at their disposal, to improve the cultivation of the thinly populated regions.

We took big estates under our own management. Motor-

ploughs and agricultural machinery of all kinds were supplied. Seed was distributed. Army horses helped in the ploughing. The main thing, however, was to stimulate the interest of the local population by paying ready money and fixing fair prices.

The prices we allowed were lower than those adopted by the General Government of Warsaw, but they were quite adequate. We took into consideration the already enormous expenditure of the Treasury. Prince Max's Government raised the prices immediately—I do not know why ; at any rate he got no thanks for it.

The soil was, generally speaking, unproductive, and disappointed our hopes. It is not drained and cultivation can only be attempted late in the season. The varieties of seed were not selected with sufficient care. Artificial manure was unknown. The yields of hay and clover, rape-seed and flax were alone satisfactory.

The transport of stores to the railway and other collecting stations was a particularly arduous business. The roads were bad, and it took days to get the produce of the land to these places in small carts drawn by one or two horses. We paid premiums, but the peculiar difficulties of this theatre of war could only be reduced, not eliminated. A good deal was never delivered at all.

Arrangements were immediately made for the installation of potato-drying plant, and we took steps to organize the production of fodder from wood and straw.

It was doubly necessary to exploit to the full the resources of the occupied territory, as the demands on the home cattle stocks were so great. Cattle had, of course, suffered severely owing to the war. A census had to be taken. It was a difficult business. Many were hidden in the cellars or driven into the forests, but we were gradually successful in our stock-taking, although there was no register. By degrees we got everything properly organized.

We paid much attention to the cultivation of vegetables and fruit. Jam and marmalade factories were established. Mushrooms in large quantities were collected and dried.

The fishing rights of the numerous large lakes were leased. At Libau deep-sea fishing was organized.

Everything that could be used for food was exploited to the fullest extent.

The condition of the town population was desperate, and in the winter of 1915–16 we were compelled to draw on our military stores for the alleviation of distress. Later, the conditions improved considerably. The Army received its share, and I also helped the home country. I remember that when in June or July, 1916, Herr von Batocki asked me to assist Berlin, I was in a position to do so.

In order to help the country we permitted the activities of the existing foreign maintenance committees of the various nationalities inhabiting the occupied territory, on condition that their support should not be confined to inhabitants of their own nationality, but that they should also consider others. The Jewish Committee, who had the largest means at their disposal (derived from America), showed themselves broad-minded, and did useful work. Their activities testified to the extraordinary unity of this people and won recognition. The first Jewish national kitchen established in Kovno bore my name. The Army Rabbi Rosenack made the suggestion to me.

Men of proved capacity gave me their assistance in all agricultural and food problems. Among these names the most prominent are those of the well-known member of the Prussian Upper Chamber, Major Count Yorck of Wartenburg, *Geh. Reg. Rat* Captain von Rümker, and later *Hofkammerrat* Major Heckel.

The conscription of horses naturally lay in the hands of the military. In this matter the District Commandants performed the same duties as the Prussian *Landrat*. The occupied territory had to supply a large number, if we wished to avoid making yet heavier demands on the home country. The Lithuanian horse is small and strong ; it possesses great powers of endurance, and its wants are few. It is therefore a very useful animal for military purposes.

The country was bound to suffer severely as the result of the continuous heavy demands made upon it, especially the constant

levies of horses and cattle. The local administrative authorities often drew my attention to this fact, but there was nothing for it but to insist on these deliveries. The area governed by us was not more severely taxed than any other. The home country also suffered from the measures we were forced to adopt.

A great deal of the discontent that was apparent later was traceable to these inevitable military requisitions. Severities that occurred from time to time may have increased this ill-feeling; they certainly did harm. The political democratic agitators made it their business to add fuel to the flames.

It would have been an absurdity to spare the area administered by the Commander-in-Chief in the East, from false humanitarian reasons at the cost of our own country.

Owing to the intensive cultivation in Germany, any action prejudicial to the agricultural industry must be far more harmful than decreased productivity in the area of the Commander-in-Chief in the East.

The provision of raw material was a specially important undertaking for which we also paid cash. The Jew was, in this instance, indispensable as middleman. We supplied the home War Department with skins and hides, copper and brass, rags and scrap iron, and further relieved it by taking over and managing the factories in Libau, Kovno and Bialystok. What became a very extensive Trade Department was gradually established, under the control of *Geheimrat* Major Eilsberger, a man of extraordinary foresight and energy, who later became Ministerial Director in the Imperial Treasury.

Great importance was attached to the manufacture of barbed wire. This, and the management of other factories, was efficiently undertaken by Captain Markau who in peace had been with the General Electric Company, and during the war with the Chief of the Field Telegraphs on the Eastern Front. In this way everything was put to the fullest possible use, each after its kind.

Amongst other things a large railway workshop was established at Libau by the military railway directorate.

With the provision of raw materials there was a slight improve-

ment in trade which was necessarily hampered by the restrictions on personal intercourse which, for military reasons, we were compelled to impose on the country.

The rich forests particularly invited exploitation, but indiscriminate felling was prohibited. The consumption of wood for field works and railway sleepers was enormous. Saw-mills arose one after the other, and as we gradually provided for all the needs of our Army, we were also able to deliver wood to the West and Serbia. Suitable timber was sent to Germany and also given to the inhabitants for the rebuilding of their homes.

At Alt-Autz, in Courland, the Chief of the Aviation Services erected a workshop for sheds and barracks.

Sleepers were made in considerable numbers.

It was extremely difficult to have the stocks of wood necessary for heating purposes always in readiness, especially in the winter of 1915–16, as we lacked all idea of the quantities required.

Cellulose wood, for the manufacture of powder and paper, was sent to Germany in considerable quantities. We soon allowed unrestricted trade in this particular kind of wood in the occupied territories, as we and Germany profited by it. I was glad to be able to help the supply of paper to the German newspapers.

Raft transport on the Niemen and other navigable rivers was undertaken and magnificently organized by *Forstrat* Schütte.

We turned our attention to the production of resin, and acting under the advice of *Oberförster* Kienitz, introduced this industry into those districts. It is a tedious but nevertheless profitable process. It was intended to demonstrate it in Germany at a later date. A factory for preparing the resin was established at Kovno.

We manufactured chemical wood-products in special factories.

Finally we went in for charcoal-burning.

Forstrat Kirchner and many other officials have left a monument of their energy and foresight. The work done by *Forstrat* Major Escherich, both as an organizer of agriculture and administrative official in his district of the Bialoviesa forest, has been the admiration of many German visitors.

The agricultural possibilities of the land were very thoroughly developed in every direction, but we spared the country and local population as much as we could. Consideration for the rate of exchange made it impossible always to pay in German money. In agreement with the Imperial Bank and the authorities in Berlin, the Army-Intendant *Geheimrat* Kessel and Captain Königs issued special local coinage of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, which was soon gladly accepted. We also opened German banks in order to revitalize economic conditions.

It was no simple matter to finance the whole administration. *Geh. Ober-Finanzrat* Captain Tiesler, who distinguished himself by his peculiarly clear insight and creative gifts, undertook this duty with great skill.

He had to draw up an exact budget for the entire administration, and at the same time find sources of revenue.

As I have said before the *personnel* employed was kept down as much as possible. There was an absolute scramble among the various departments of my administration for places and extra pay for the subordinates.

The commandants on the Lines of Communication were always coming to me with fresh demands. I had to smooth things over, and so gained some idea of the trials and anxieties of our national financial administration.

As soon as we had successfully drawn up our first budget, we forwarded it to the War Ministry in Berlin, and to the Quartermaster-General. After careful scrutiny and violent disagreement it was at last approved.

Our revenue was derived from customs, monopolies, taxes and national industries.

The technical details of the whole system of taxation had to be arranged on the simplest possible lines. It would have been impossible to introduce a more complicated and therefore more equitable system in the first place, because we lacked a trained staff. Besides, nothing had been left of the Russian system, and in any case the population was ignorant of these matters. The bulk of our revenue was derived from customs, indirect taxation and monopolies, in view of the Russian practice.

Import duties were collected at the frontiers by Prussian financial officials, against an indemnity to the Prussian Treasury.

Private parcels intended for the army were, of course, duty free. Only the few consignments intended for the population were affected, and the revenue derived from this source was small.

We levied a small export duty only on cellulose wood. It did not bring in much.

The taxes yielded more. Captain Tiesler established a monopoly of the sale of cigarettes, the financial technicalities of which seem to me worthy of imitation. Monopolies of spirits, salt, matches and confectionery were introduced, on the same lines.

For direct taxes we introduced a rough system of graded taxation per head. There was no better basis for a system of personal assessment.

As regards taxation on property, we introduced a tax on land and profits and inhabited house duty.

The people on the whole were satisfied with the taxation, which did not burden them heavily. The total taxes per head, including the local rates, did not exceed 19.50 marks annually, as against 32.75 marks before the war. They could not, however, get used to the dog licence. Owing to hydrophobia, dogs had become a danger to the country, and counter measures had to be taken. The tax, however, was abolished when its purpose in that respect had been accomplished.

At first the Government undertakings yielded very little profit. This was due partly to the heavy initial expenses and the high cost of liquidation, and partly to the economic isolation of Germany which made it necessary to concentrate on the maximum of production rather than financial profit.

I have only indicated the principal items of taxation. Further sources of revenue were gradually developed. The results were favourable, for the receipts sufficed for the administration of the country without assistance from the Imperial Treasury. A system had been established, which, though based on broad principles, had required the most careful elaboration in detail.

VIII

The legal system was in accordance with the Hague Convention. This required in matters of private litigation that the local population should have the benefit of their own laws. Our first business, however, was to find out what the law really was. This was no easy matter, owing to the confusion in the Russian system, a confusion which had existed in this region even before the war.

When we found out what the law was it had to be translated into German to enable the German judges to give judgment accordingly. I firmly believe that only Germans would take so much trouble in a conquered country. In spite of that, enemy propaganda denounced us as Huns to the world at large so successfully that we were helpless against it.

President Kratzenberg did excellent work in his quiet, clear-headed way. The German judge administered foreign laws to the poor, vermin-infested villages of Lithuania in the same spirit of justice and impartiality that he would have shown in Berlin. Who can emulate this ?

Major Altman, Inspector of Schools in the Prussian Ministry of Education, drew up a scheme for the guidance of schools, to the further benefit of the population. It was conceived in a lofty spirit and respected the rights of each denomination and race. Here, as elsewhere, anything of a provocative nature was studiously excluded. There was a dearth of teachers for the schools, so we supplied members of the teaching profession from the Landsturm. Later on, the complaint was made that they spoke only German to the children who, after all, attended voluntarily. The teachers unfortunately knew no other language, and we had very few Lithuanian or Polish-speaking teachers at our disposal.

We turned our attention to the question of school books, for various Polish school books had shown me what education can do to intensify national feeling. Dantzig, Gnesen, Posen and Vilna

were Polish towns. This fact impressed me as deeply as the systematic manner in which France had educated her youth in the idea of *revanche*. The Poles and the French have by these means kept alive a strong national feeling, which stands them in good stead now. We have not pursued such an educational policy and suffer from the fact that the strong national idea has not been instilled into our youth. Such a feeling is necessary if a country is to survive crises such as we have lived through since 1914, and now more than ever. This view is rejected by all who think that the ideal of human brotherhood comes first. That is natural enough from their point of view. The logic of facts, however, is against them until all nations adopt the same point of view. Would that we too had had, what we so sorely needed, a strong national feeling !

No restrictions were imposed on anyone in the practice of his religion. We went so far in our desire for toleration as to give the Jews wheaten flour for unleavened bread.

The Evangelical clergy in Courland were wholly on our side, and we were soon on satisfactory terms with the Catholic priesthood of Lithuania. The Polish Catholics however, were hostile to us. To a certain extent the attitude of the people towards us was reflected in that of the Church, but the Lithuanian clergy were on the whole better disposed to us than the democracy in Vilna, who soon lost all status through their muddle-headed ambitions.

The Polish clergy were the pillars of Polish national propaganda. They had preserved that character even under the Russian knout. They were at war with the Lithuanians and had already overthrown the White Ruthenes. That the Russians should have allowed such a state of affairs is incomprehensible. The White Ruthenes had to conduct their religious service in Polish, not in their own tongue, and this with Russian approval ! The assistance of the clergy was invoked there to oppress the White Ruthenes, as their brothers in East Galicia were oppressed.

The Poles soon put forward claims in educational matters, and were anxious to have their own University in Vilna, but I refused permission.

As long as I controlled the administration we maintained a neutral attitude towards the various races. The Poles regarded us as anti-Polish, because we gave the Lithuanians equal rights with them. I knew we should make no friends by pursuing a neutral policy.

I had purposely held aloof from racial politics, as I knew it would be impossible to deal with this question until the Polish situation had been cleared up. As the Imperial Government did not commit itself to any definite policy, my reserve was justified. In view of the general condition of the country, any political intervention would have been mistimed.

I could therefore not make up my mind to ask the Imperial Chancellor to draw up any definite political programme, and merely kept him informed as to my views.

Every race had its own newspaper which was, of course, subject to censorship. As a German paper, the *Kovnoer Zeitung* took precedence. For the Press and the censorship, Captain Bertkau acted as my adviser. He combined great energy and a detailed knowledge of Press technicalities with an independent and mature political judgment, and so was of great use to me. He had previously worked with the publishing house of Ulstein, while the editor of the *Kovnoer Zeitung*, Lieut. Osman, had been on the staff of the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*. With his strong national feeling, he was just what I wanted.

I gave all newspapers clear instructions to discuss events in Germany in a spirit acceptable to the Imperial Government. I could not, of course, permit any political activity on the part of the people. They were also forbidden to hold meetings.

Despite the necessary limitation of intercourse among the population, I permitted a certain amount of correspondence. I established a local post, with the aid of the Imperial Post Office. Imperial postage stamps were used, surcharged for the territory of the Commander-in-Chief in the East.

Lastly, we allowed freer intercourse between the Lithuanians and Jews and their compatriots in the United States.

We observed with satisfaction that the country was gradually settling down, and that life was once more falling into an orderly

routine. The German love of order and knowledge of hygiene carried the day. The peasant earned more than he had done under the Russians. In the towns business was revived.

The population was governed with a calm and steady hand. I objected to the compulsory military salute introduced by one army. I believe that to-day the people will acknowledge that we acted with justice and moderation.

IX

The economic measures which had been introduced into the occupied territories were carried out in the operations zone by the troops. In particular, many saw mills were erected by the men, there being not only a big demand for planks, but also for wood shavings for the mattresses of officers and men, and bedding for the horses.

The monotony of trench warfare was greatly relieved for the men by their industrial employment. I sympathized with this feeling and was glad to find a fresh field in which to serve the Fatherland. A very stimulating piece of work had fallen to me, which made heavy demands on me. I came to know splendid men and had to interest myself in many spheres of activity quite new to me. It was a great satisfaction to know that the officers of the military administration placed unlimited confidence in me. My will permeated every branch of the administrative services and kept alive their zeal for work. We felt that we were working for Germany's future, even in a strange land. We especially hoped to open a field for German colonization in Courland. I prohibited the sale of land in order to lay the foundation of a sound land and colonial policy, and also to prevent its exploitation. At that time I had in mind plans similar to those which the Navy had carried out with great success at Kiauchou.

What the Commander-in-Chief in the East accomplished in the short time before the beginning of August, 1916, when I left, was a work for civilization.

The beautiful gift later presented to me in Pless by the administrative officials will always remind me of the time when it was granted me, in the midst of war, to do constructive work.

This work was not wasted, for it certainly helped the Home Country, the Army, and the land itself during the war, but whether seeds have remained in the soil which may later spring up and bear fruit is a question dependent on our hard fate, a question that only the future can answer.

THE CAMPAIGN AND CRISIS IN THE EAST

X

While the Commander-in-Chief in the East was quietly working for the welfare of the Army and the occupied territory, the war continued on its course.

In November and December, 1915, our successes against Serbia and Montenegro had brought on the fourth Isonzo battle, and, about Christmas, the Russian offensive on the southern portion of the Austro-Hungarian front. This attack lasted into January of 1916. Both concluded in a successful resistance on the part of our Allies.

The two General Staffs had now to make their plans for the campaign of 1916. Both were to attempt an offensive to bring about a decision. The German G.H.Q. proposed to attack at Verdun, while the Austro-Hungarian had in view an offensive against Italy from the Tyrol.

This laid on the whole Eastern Front the obligation of giving up reserves and parrying the Russian attacks which could be anticipated with certainty.

Strategically Verdun as the point of attack was well chosen This fortress had always served as a particularly dangerous sally-port, which very seriously threatened our communications, as the autumn of 1918 disastrously proved. Had we only been able to reach the defences on the right bank of the Meuse, we should have

achieved complete success. Our strategic position on the Western Front, as well as the tactical situation of our troops in the St. Mihiel salient, would have been materially improved. The attack began on February 21st and met with great success, especially during the early days, owing to the brilliant qualities of our men. The advantage, however, was insufficiently exploited, and our advance soon came to a standstill. At the beginning of March the world was still under the impression that the Germans had won a victory at Verdun.

The Tyrol offensive against Italy by the Austrian troops was only to begin at the end of April or early in May. Owing to the bad railway communications, preparation had to be made very early.

To make the offensive against Verdun possible, heavy artillery had to be transferred from the German East Front to the West. G.H.Q. had brought back the divisions from Serbia, and in order to reinforce the Italian Front, the Eastern Front had been greatly weakened by the Austrian General Staff. Both offensives were to suffer from the fact that failing impetus prevented the first successes from being followed up. At Verdun, perhaps, as the attack was restricted to a tactical operation, we only just fell short of obtaining a moderately favourable conclusion.

But in Italy it was a question of an operation on the grand scale which from the start demanded for success much larger reserves than were available. Yielding to this demand led to a very serious weakening of the Eastern Front, where the position was already critical on account of the great numerical superiority of the Russians, even if a decisive victory were won in Italy. It appears, too, that the successful repulse of the Russian winter offensive had made Austria-Hungary cock-sure.

I am unable to say whether the two General Staffs could have embarked on different operations altogether, or have undertaken a joint offensive against Italy. In any case, the result of the war was not to be decided on the Italian Front. The decision could only come in the West, in France. And we should only be strong enough for a decision on that front when the Russians had been defeated.

My thoughts turned to Rumania. She was the feather in the scales. We had to know what her attitude was. Had Rumania, even under pressure, joined forces with us, the Russian Army would have been outflanked. This offered great possibilities. If, under pressure from us, Rumania turned to the Entente, we should, at any rate, have known how matters stood. We could act without delay with the troops on the spot at the time.

The Quadruple Alliance was on the defensive in the Balkans and Asia Minor. Only south of Bagdad Field-Marshal von der Goltz was preparing to attack the English at Kut-el-Amara.

As a result of the evacuation of Gallipoli by the Entente, the position of Turkey was considerably improved.

I do not know what the Entente had in view for 1916 before the French Army was compelled to concentrate on Verdun. It appeared, and indeed it was only to be expected, that they were contemplating great offensives on all fronts.

The Russian advance into Armenia, which in the spring of 1916 led to the capture of Trebizond and Erzerum, was of no strategic value, and the Russians had no need to make any special effort. They held a more favourable position, and had great numerical superiority over the Turks.

The English operations in Persia, Mesopotamia and the Peninsula of Sinai were, on the same principle, not directed to the destruction of the Turkish Army, but aimed at territorial acquisitions for the British World Empire.

XI

The German offensive at Verdun in March led to the fifth Isonzo Battle. This Italian attack, therefore, took place long before the contemplated Austro-Hungarian offensive. It was once more unsuccessful.

The Russian Army also came on the scenes. The Russian attack in the second half of March against our Eastern Front was much more than an attempt at a relief offensive. It was to

be a decisive battle, and had that character from the start. Captured army orders were found, speaking of driving the enemy back beyond the frontiers of the Empire.

Since the beginning of March rumours had been current of a proposed offensive against Vilna. A concentration of troops had been observed east of Smorgon. The Smorgon–Vilna direction seemed to be indicated. Reports of a coming offensive also reached us from Dvinsk and Jakobstadt. Counter-measures were taken. We gathered that it was not exactly imminent, and I decided to go for two days to Berlin on family matters, and attend the wedding of Captain Prince Joachim of Prussia who had been a valuable member of our staff since autumn, 1914. I was in Berlin on the 11th and 12th of March, when I received news which seemed to indicate that the attack was to begin shortly. So I was relieved to find myself back at Kovno.

The Russian bombardment began on the 16th, not, however, in the Smorgon region, as I expected, but on the narrow front between Lakes Narotch and Vischniev, on both sides of the Sventsiany–Postavy railway, and south-west of Dvinsk. The artillery duel was of unprecedented intensity for the Eastern Front. It was resumed on the 17th. On the 18th the infantry attacks began, and continued with intervals until the end of March.

The Russian aim was to cut off our north wing in the direction of Kovno, and shatter it by attacks at other points. In the second stage, it was to be thrown back against the coast north of the Niemen. This plan was conceived on a grand scale.

The first move in this pinching-out process was to cut a piece out of our front in the direction of Sventsiany by the two attacks from the Vischniev–Narotch sector and at Postavy. The front was wide and well chosen. Our reserves would have been insufficient to close up the gap. Besides, it was very difficult to rush them up to the line, owing to the bad railway connection with Lake Narotch. The railway was in process of construction. If the gap were once forced, the rest would follow. The way to Kovno would lie open.

The attacks on the northern portion of our front were made from the south of Lake Drysviaty, near Widsy, and chiefly from the bridge-heads at Dvinsk and Jakobstadt.

From the 18th to the 21st of March the situation of the 10th

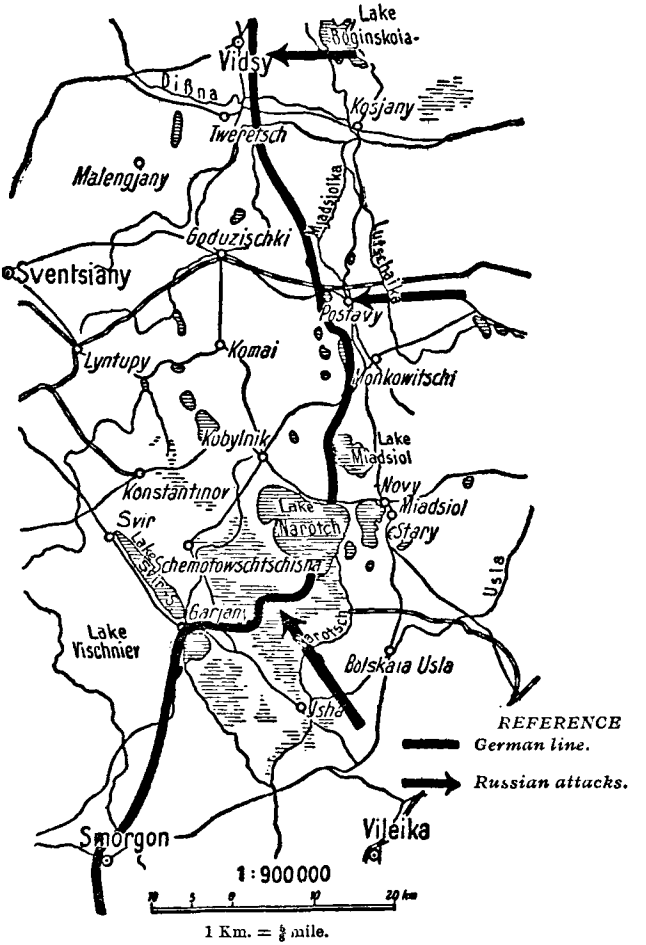


Fig. 7. The Battle of Lake Narotch, March, 1916.

Army was critical and the numerical superiority of the Russians overwhelming. On the 21st they won a success on the narrow lake sector which affected us gravely, and even the attack west of Postavy was only stemmed with difficulty.

The ground had become soft, and in that marshy country

water collected in ponds; the roads were literally bottomless. The reserves which we drew from the 10th Army could only make slow progress from the Vilna–Dvinsk railway by wading through the swamps. Everyone was strung up to the highest pitch of anxiety, wondering what would happen next.

But the Russians, whose offensive had led them into even heavier ground than we had, in and behind our positions, were exhausted, and when the Russian offensive again reached its highest pitch on March 26th, we had practically overcome the crisis.

The position of Scholtz's Army Group and the 8th Army was no less difficult. Although holding a long front, the Body Hussars Brigade was compelled to defend itself at Vidsy against the massed attacks of the enemy. It did wonders. Further north at Dvinsk the enemy made particularly determined attacks. Divisions of the oldest classes displayed the same spirit of self-sacrifice as the younger comrades at their side.

The front was particularly thin at Jakobstadt, but the West Prussian regiments there did their duty.

The attacks of the enemy collapsed. The Russian offensive was petering out by the end of March. As has been truly said, without exaggeration, it had been choked in "swamp and blood." The losses suffered by the Russians had been extraordinarily heavy.

Our thin lines, manned by well-trained and brave troops, with their proper quota of officers, had triumphed over the massed attacks of the badly-trained Russian Army. The efforts of our troops had been very strenuous owing to the swampy ground and wet and cold weather.

The front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East had survived its first great defensive action.

One would expect such a defensive battle to be less strain on the Higher Command than an offensive, but in reality it is much more nerve-racking. The Commander must content himself with providing reserves at the right time, but for this to be possible the reserves must be available. That is a difficult matter when the Command is forced to live from hand to mouth, as we had to.

Further, it is not easy to make up one's mind to transfer reserves before the direction of the attack is known with certainty, and yet it has to be done, or they will arrive too late. Nor is it easy to expect the subordinate Commands to give up their reserves, when they themselves anticipate attack. But the cordial relations which existed between Lieut.-Colonel Hoffmann and myself and the various army commanders enabled us to settle these serious problems without friction, to the general benefit of the army. At the beginning of April things quietened down.

On April 28th, in a vigorous operation, carefully prepared by powerful artillery, the 10th Army recaptured the lost ground between Lake Narotch and Lake Vischniev. It was the first engagement on the Eastern Front in which we employed the artillery methods which had now become customary in the West. The result was good.

We reckoned on a continuation of the great Russian offensive. The armies were organized accordingly and reserves held in readiness. By order of G.H.Q. certain German divisions with the Austro-Hungarian Army were sent to us. Later in May fresh attacks from the Riga bridge-head and the region of Smorgon seemed imminent. We took measures accordingly, and even contemplated an offensive of our own. But with the inadequate forces at our disposal, this offensive could only be a local one at Riga, with the object of removing that very inconvenient bridge-head.

At the end of May His Majesty visited us. The Kaiser went over the whole of the area under the Commander-in-Chief in the East. The Field-Marshal and I accompanied him. We also went to Mitau. I shall never forget how German everything seemed there. Everyone who went for the first time to these Baltic provinces had the same feeling, that here was a piece of their own native soil.

At the beginning of June we celebrated the victory of our Fleet in the Skager Rack battle, another of those great achievements in the war which influenced the attitude of the neutral States. But our rejoicings were damped by our losses, which turned out to be heavier than at first reported.

XII

I had followed the doings of our Navy with much interest. In peace time we had set great store by it. Now, as a fighting weapon side by side with the Army, it had to fight for victory to save us from strangulation by England. It was to be expected that in accordance with England's historical traditions, her share in the war would take the form of a ruthless fight against the home populations of the Central Powers, regardless alike of international law or the laws of humanity. It was clear from the start that our warships could not keep the seas open. The Mediterranean division went to Constantinople.

After the successful Japanese attack on Kiao-chau, whose garrison put up a brave fight, our cruiser-squadron in East Asia and the Southern Pacific was left without any support and compelled to return to the home harbours. The battle of Coronel on November 1st, and that of the Falkland Islands on December 3rd, 1914, mark the victory, distress and extinction of our cruiser squadron. These battles fill every German heart with pride and sorrow.

Our cruisers and auxiliary cruisers had sown enemy waters with mines, and from time to time even made the high seas dangerous to the enemy. They brought fresh laurels to German valour, but were unable to accomplish anything decisive. All the same, their deeds were not in vain, for they will ever be a source of pride to the Germans.

The Mediterranean division in the Bosphorus was, on the whole, doomed to inactivity, after the Entente had given up the attack on Constantinople. The enemy had a great superiority in the Black and Mediterranean Seas. The Austro-Hungarian Navy was not very enterprising. After Italy's declaration of war, it made only a few unimportant raids along the east coast of that country. In the Baltic the fighting strength on each side was such as to enable us to maintain our merchant service.

This was of paramount importance to us on account of the importation of iron ore from Sweden.

The Navy fulfilled a part of its duties in maintaining the freedom of the Baltic. This enabled the Commander-in-Chief in the East to establish communication between Libau and the German harbours in the Baltic, which was of the utmost importance for the supply of our troops in Courland. In addition to to this the Fleet practised in the West Baltic.

The bulk of our Fleet was in the North Sea protected by our bases at the mouth of the Elbe, Heligoland and Wilhelmshaven. We ought to have sought a decisive battle at the beginning of the war. This, indeed, was the desire of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, though he did not sufficiently insist upon it. Only by this means could we hope to defeat the enemy plans, of which we had no clear idea. After the English naval manœuvres of 1910–11, there were signs that England contemplated an extensive blockade. It was in defiance of international law, and could only be carried out provided that neutrals, particularly the United States, tolerated it.

England avoided battle, though the British had everything to gain by venturing upon it. Tradition, her strength and the war situation should have urged her to it. Had England won such a battle, she would have made it almost impossible for us to import iron from Sweden and the submarine warfare could never have assumed proportions so dangerous to herself. Great Britain preserved her Fleet for political reasons. She realized that a battle with the German Fleet might cost her not only her place in the world, but also her prestige among her Allies and even at home. The other reasons put forward, such as the dearth of docks on the East Coast, to enable her to effect swift repairs after battle, are not convincing. It is not to the credit of England's proud Navy that she refrained from giving battle.

The naval action in the Heligoland Bight on August 28th, 1914, was of no strategical importance. Our cruisers were attracted by the love of adventure. Our Fleet was more enterprising than that of the enemy. We bombarded the English

coast that had not been attacked for centuries. The battle off the Dogger Bank on January 24th was the result of such an attack.

Our naval policy of compelling the English to give battle as near our coasts as possible was pursued more definitely when Admiral Scheer assumed command of the Fleet. On May 31st, 1916, he successfully achieved his end. He was not afraid, although far from all our naval bases.

Owing to the caution of the hostile Fleet, our naval fortresses did not appear to be threatened, and we were able to withdraw their garrisons.

They went to form the Marine Corps, which was employed on the Flanders coast after the taking of Antwerp. Certain marine divisions also fought with distinction in the land campaigns.

Meanwhile the submarine warfare on enemy ships within a certain zone round England began on February 4th, 1915. At the time this was against the advice of Admiral von Tirpitz, who considered such a plan premature. We had a very small number of submarines; I do not know why. In any case, what the U boats accomplished was only realized during the war as the successes won by the crews increased, and they gained in experience. The submarine campaign proclaimed on February 4th did not materialize, as for political reasons it was directed exclusively against enemy merchant ships. Further restrictions soon followed that entirely crippled it.

After the sinking of the *Lusitania* it fell into abeyance for the time, but was revived for a short time from November, 1915, to February, 1916. After the sinking of the *Sussex* on March 24th, 1916, Germany declared her intention of prosecuting the campaign only according to the rules of the Prize Court. The U boat warfare was thereupon suspended.

In their fear of submarine warfare, our enemies did not hesitate to call the U boat a weapon the use of which was contrary to international law and humane principles. This was a surprising doctrine in view of the perpetual violation of international law by the Entente. New weapons of war create

new international precedents. The United States acknowledged this in their Note to England of March 5th, 1915.

Admiral Sir Percy Scott, a man whose opinion carried weight, took up the same attitude in the *Times* of July 16th, 1914. He wrote:

"Such a procedure [a blockade by means of mines and submarines] would in my opinion be perfectly in order, and, once it had been made, if any British or neutral ships disregarded it and attempted to run the blockade, they could not be held to be engaged in the peaceful avocations referred to by Lord Sydenham, and if they were sunk in the attempt it could not be described as a relapse into savagery, or piracy in its blackest form."

We were within our rights, as far as the submarine war was concerned, in adopting such measures as we considered necessary to serve our purpose in the war, so long as they were in accordance with the laws of humanity, and showed due regard for neutrals.

We found the right solution, and no criticism can make any difference, as the future will prove.

At the very beginning of the war, England, in total disregard of International Law, started the war of starvation against Germany and Austria-Hungary. This strangling hunger-blockade was intended so to debilitate the body as to prepare the mind for the poison of propaganda. England had another aim: to make war against the children still unborn, so that a physically inferior race might arise in Germany. A more gruesome method cannot be imagined. England acted with inexorable consistency, as so often before in her cruel history. Step by step, and of set purpose, the English Government, by Orders in Council of August 20th and October 29th, 1914, and other economic and military decrees, suppressed all direct traffic to the German harbours, all imports through neutral countries, and even the import of the products of neutral countries into Germany.

The trump card was the proclamation of the North Sea as a "War Zone" on November 2nd, 1914. The northern approaches to the North Sea were thereby completely cut off,

and the neutral trading vessels were compelled to go through the Channel, close to the English coast, and could then only proceed on one track, right across the North Sea. And yet at the beginning of the war England had declared that she would in principle accept the convention of the Declaration of London as her standard of action. Her attitude in the years before the war was also quite different.

With the declaration of a War Zone she had allowed it to be understood that she would no longer consider herself bound by the regulations of cruiser warfare as laid down by the Prize Courts, and also that she considered herself justified in the adoption of violent measures against traffic in the War Zone. Germany was therefore blockaded, although there was no lawful blockade. The only reason why a true blockade was ineffective, according to the rules of naval warfare, was that England was powerless to hinder traffic in the Baltic.

The German declaration of a " War Zone " on February 4th, 1915, only a similar measure to the English precedent, gave England an excuse for further severity in the economic war against the Central Powers. In the famous Order in Council of March 11th, 1915, she declared her intention of seizing all ships entering or leaving Germany. All goods intended for Germany, or exported from there, as well as all goods in German ownership, or of German origin, even if the property of neutrals, could henceforward be taken from neutral ships.

This was another unexampled instance of putting might before right. England justified herself by declaring this procedure to be an act of reprisal against the submarine warfare commenced in February, 1915. This defence fell to the ground when Germany, after the *Sussex* case, formally renounced submarine warfare. Had England acted in accordance with her declarations, she would have raised the so-called blockade, now that the reason for retaliation had lapsed. But she never thought of such a thing. The blockade went on as before.

By Order in Council of June 7th, 1916, England finally abandoned the Declaration of London. In this way those principles, which, despite repeated assurances, no one had attempted to

maintain, were formally denounced. The violation of International Law was to be made legal and valid!

We in the East also felt the effects of England's continued violation of International Law. In the long run it was bound to help the cause of the Entente, as the United States, both before and after her entry into the war, had given her sanction, and the neutrals of Europe were in England's power.

XIII

The German attack at Verdun led to no decisive result. By May it bore the stamp of the first great battle of attrition, in which the struggle for victory means feeding the fighting line with a continuous mass of men and materials. The other parts of the Western Front were inactive.

On May 15th, the Austro-Hungarian offensive against Italy had at length begun, and at first was brilliantly successful and brought our Allies to the Asiago-Arsiero line. But by the end of the month it was clear that the operation had lost its impetus. All was quiet on the Macedonian and Turkish Fronts, except for the fighting in Mesopotamia. Kut-el-Amara was taken towards the end of April, but Field-Marshal von der Goltz, who had prepared the way for this victory, did not live to see it. He died of spotted fever shortly before the attack.

In the East there were signs that local attacks on the Austro-Hungarian Army were probable, although the bulk of the Russian Army remained on the German Front in readiness to attack us there.

The Entente were planning a powerful assault on their most formidable enemy—the German Army. In the West there was to be the offensive on the Somme. In the East the Russians were to start an offensive, with Baranovici, Smorgon and Riga as its critical points.

Their operations on the Austro-Hungarian front in the beginning of June, in the region of Lutsk, Tarnopol and on the Dniester, were more in the nature of a demonstration.

At first much larger reserves were concentrated behind the selected sectors of the German Front than in the Lutsk and Bukovina sectors.

Russia's amazing victories over the Austro–Hungarian troops induced her to abandon her proposed offensive against the front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, except for the move in the direction of Baranovici, and concentrate all her efforts against Austria–Hungary. The more the German Front proved itself inviolable, the more eagerly did the Russians turn from it to hurl themselves against their weaker foe, the Austro–Hungarian Army between the Pripet and the Carpathians.

The front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East was there fore denuded as occasion required, in order to bolster up the fronts further south. A very intimate connection sprang up between the tactical operations of the Army Group under Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria and those of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, as, indeed, between the whole German and Austro–Hungarian Fronts.

The previous arrangements between the two General Staffs had been good enough for periods of inactivity, but never contemplated such a situation as developed out of the Russian offensive. It was now imperative to act quickly. Reference to the two G.H.Q.'s in Charleville or Pless and Teschen might mean a loss of time that could never be recovered. Even in the great March offensive our liaison system had been found inconvenient. We were only able to avoid friction because we always worked so well with the Army Group of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria and Woyrsch's Group under his command. From that time the question of a single command had not been lost sight of. First, the proposal to put Prince Leopold's group under the command of the Commander-in-Chief in the East was frequently discussed. But a wholesale change—such as war is constantly calling for—was what was required, and that meant that the Commander-in-Chief in the East would have to take over the command of the whole Eastern Front from the Gulf of Riga to the Carpathians.

But bitter experience was needed before this change was

effected. Irrelevant matters that had nothing to do with the issue aggravated the problem. In the first place, the Austrian General Staff, for reasons of so-called prestige, found it difficult to contemplate any limitation of its tactical authority over the Austro–Hungarian troops. In its interpretation of its powers it jealously maintained the Austrian point of view of not letting Germany's military predominance become apparent. Germany, on the other hand, considered military necessities and nothing else.

On June 4th the Russian offensive against the Austro–Hungarian Front east of Lutsk, at Tarnopol and immediately north of the Dniester began.

Their attacks were carried out, though the Russians had no decisive superiority in numbers. In the neighbourhood of Tarnopol they were completely repulsed by the Army of General Count von Bothmer who had taken over the command of the German Southern Army in succession to General von Linsingen, but they broke through in the two other places and won a complete victory. At both points they penetrated deep into the Austro–Hungarian positions. Things were all the more critical because the Austrians had shown such small powers of resistance that at one blow the whole Eastern Front was in dire jeopardy. Although we were anticipating an attack on our front, we immediately started divisions on the southward march. Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's Army Group also responded to the requirements of the situation. Our G.H.Q. made heavy demands on both groups, and also withdrew divisions from the West. The Battle of the Somme had not yet begun. Austria gradually broke off the Italian offensive, and sent troops to the Eastern Front.

The Italian Army now started a counter-offensive in the Tyrol The face of the war had changed completely. Not much later the opening of the Somme battle and Roumania's declaration of war was to make our position still more unfavourable.

G.H.Q. seems to have had some hope of neutralizing the piercing of our lines by the enemy at Lutsk by a counter-attack

(an operation similar to our successful counter-attack in November and December, 1917, at Cambrai), and at the same time holding up the advance of the troops that had broken through so far on the Dniester.

Thanks to the failure of the Austrian defence, the Russian offensive at Lutsk made rapid progress, and following the railway to Kowel, soon reached the Stochod. The first German reinforcements became involved in the retreat. A new German front was gradually created on the Stochod on both sides of the railway. It was in touch with the Austrian troops who were still holding the Styr. The Russians had not followed up very smartly in a westerly direction, although a great victory was beckoning them. They had too few reserves at hand to make full use of their opportunity.

At Saturtzky and Kisielin, some way west of the Stochod, the beaten Austrian Army was able to collect its remnants. It was obvious that the wing of the Austrian Army which had escaped south of Lutsk would have to swing back quickly to avoid being rolled up. Here again Brussiloff was not strong enough for a really energetic pursuit. The arrival of further reserves strengthened the front on both sides of the Kowel–Lutsk railway. They came up with the 4th Army further south, and somewhere near Gorochow formed a strong counter-offensive group behind the Austrian wing retreating to the south-west. Our critical situation did not allow of our waiting for the arrival of all our reserves in order to attack all together, although Linsingen's Group always wished to do so.

The counter-attacks of the German troops during the latter half of June and early part of July obtained only local successes. The Russian offensive on the Dniester had broken through the Austrian divisions under General von Pflanzer–Baltin in the Okna (east of Zaleszsyki)–Sniatin direction, and south of the river soon gained a lot of ground. Czernowitz fell. By the end of June the Russians had reached a line from the Dniester, through Tlumacz, to Kolomea and Kimpolung, and were pushing on toward the Carpathian passes.

The Austrian front south of the Dniester, originally a very

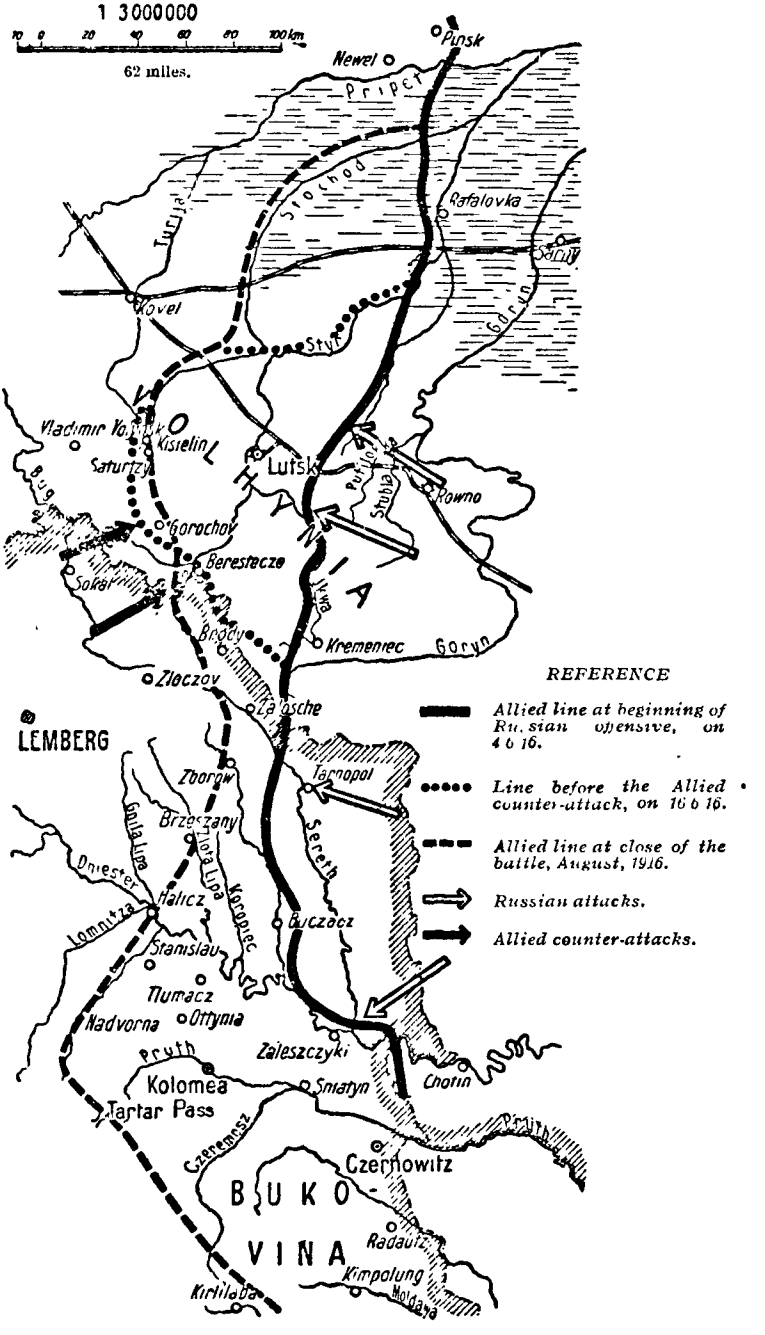


Fig. 8. The Russian Offensive, 1916

short one between the river and the Roumanian frontier, had now become very much longer, and this long new line was, of course, now correspondingly thin.

Owing to the extraordinarily bad railway communications reserves could only be brought up with the greatest difficulty. German troops from the front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, as well as the Western Front, were conveyed to the Carpathians and the Dniester. Even all the fresh divisions that were thrown in were hardly sufficient to hold the front. In these circumstances counter-attacks were inadvisable. They were attempted by our troops all the same, but remained without result. A pure defence from the start would have been our proper course, as the Russians were also contending against extraordinary difficulties of supply and were not very strong. This fact helped the Austrian Army more than its own defence. Owing to the complete failure of our Allies south of the Dniester, General von Bothmer saw himself compelled at the beginning of July to withdraw his right wing from Buczacz as far as the mouth of the Koropiec. Thanks to the excellent influence of our army on the Austrian troops with it, all the Russian attacks had been beaten off.

While the Russian onslaught on the Austrian Army was gaining its first successes, and when the greater part of the Commander-in-Chief in the East's and Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's reserves had proceeded to the relief of our Allies' front, a violent Russian attack was delivered against Woyrsch's Army Group on June 13th. It collapsed completely after extraordinarily severe fighting. The Army Group and General von Woyrsch were compelled to throw in all their reserves.

At that time we were anticipating an attack at Smorgon, or, as now seemed more probable, on the old battlefields of March, and at Riga. At these points the Russians were still in very great strength. In spite of this we denuded our front to the utmost to help the armies in the south. We even had battalions to serve as reserves for our long lines. I formed these battalions from men at recruit depots, although I realized that if the

Russians had a really great success at any point these units would be but a drop of water on a hot stone. We were absolutely confident that our troops would hold their positions, however thin their lines were. Our anxiety increased with the progress of events.

In the first place, the Russian forces on our front had not been noticeably reduced. They had to decide whether they would really attack us, or follow up and consolidate their successes in the south. Of course they realized that we and Austria-Hungary would send reinforcements. They meant to obtain a decision on the Austrian Front, but had such large reserves at their disposal that they could attack us in force as well, and thereby prevent us from sending further help to the south. While the Germans and Austrians were concentrating round the Lutsk salient, on the Dniester and in the Carpathians, and in the second half of June making local attacks nearly everywhere, the Russians rushed up reserves to the points where they had broken through and brought the German local efforts to a standstill by counter-attacks.

In the middle of July, after severe fighting, in which the Austrian troops had again shown only slight resisting power, they prevented the Germans from developing their initial successes in the Lutsk salient. They pushed forwards south-west to the Styr. General von Boehm-Ermolli found himself compelled to withdraw his left wing and centre to the frontier of Galicia. But in the Lutsk salient the Russian offensive was held up.

The enemy gained still more ground south of the Dniester in the direction of the Carpathians.

While all this was taking place at the two main points of attack, the Russians embarked on a violent onslaught on the front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, between Lakes Narotch and Vischniev and at Smorgon, on the Army Group of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria, north-east and south of Baranovici, and on von Linsingen's Army Group in the bend of the Styr. General Bothmer was also engaged.

In July a terrible struggle was raging on the Eastern Front,

while in the West England and France were gaining their first successes on the Somme. We managed to hold out against the attacks, and beat them off in battles lasting many days.

The line of Woyrsch's Group was successfully forced at the point where it was held by Austro-Hungarian troops. To fill the gap we threw in all our carefully hoarded reserves. They held their ground, and from July 8th onwards the battle here died down.

The Russian offensive at the bend of the Styr, north of Lutsk, was completely successful. The Austro-Hungarian troops let their lines be broken through in several places. The German units that had been sent to help were once more in a critical position, and on July 7th General von Linsingen was compelled to withdraw his left wing behind the Stochod. The right wing of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's Army Group—part of Gronau's Group, south of the Pripet—had to retire also.

This was one of the greatest crises on the Eastern Front. We had little hope that the Austro-Hungarian troops would be able to hold the line of the Stochod, which was unfortified.

We took the risk of denuding our lines still further, and Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria followed our example. Although the Russian attack might begin again at any moment, we extended our line and released single regiments in order to support the left wing of Linsingen's Army Group, north-east and east of Kowel. If this wing were to retreat still further it was impossible to imagine when it would end. Those were terribly anxious days. We gave up everything we had, knowing full well that if the enemy were to attack us no one could help us.

And that is just what happened.

On July 16th, the Russians, in enormous force, poured out from the Riga bridgehead west of the Dvina and gained ground at once.

We went through a terrible time until the crisis here was overcome, thanks to the valour of the troops and the careful handling of affairs by the Headquarters Staff of the 8th Army

who were compelled to use single battalions and batteries as reserves.

These battles were not yet over at the end of July, when there were sure indications that the attacks at Baranovici and along the whole course of the Stochod would be resumed. We awaited these with a sinking heart, for our troops were exhausted by constant fighting and had long fronts to defend. The Austro-Hungarian troops had lost all confidence in themselves, and needed German support everywhere.

We could see everything that was going on as far as the Stochod, but further south we were less in the picture. We only knew that General von Boehm-Ermolli was also now expecting an attack at Brody, that the Russians were continuing their offensive between the Dniester and the Carpathians in full strength, and that they were gaining ground towards the crest of the ridge.

General Count Bothmer had stood like a rock in the maelstrom of continuous attacks, and in all essentials remained master of the situation.

It was clear that the Russians were gathering strength for another mighty blow, while we were still bleeding from many wounds on the Somme, and the Austro-Hungarian troops were being hard pressed on the Italian Front. Storms were threatening, and our nerves were strung to the highest pitch.

XIV

We had maintained the closest touch with G.H.Q. during the difficult and anxious days we had passed through in Kovno since the beginning of June. We had repeatedly pointed out the necessity of unity of command on the Eastern Front. Of course, if necessary, we could have carried on as before, but it had become evident that reserves could be moved about with less friction if the command of the whole Eastern Front was under one control. Before the end of June the Field-Marshal and I were summoned to Pless to give our views on the posi-

tion in the East. It could only be described as very grave. Of course we came back to the question of the Single Command, and in this connection we emphasized the necessity of extending the process of mixing German troops with the Austro-Hungarian units. Also, Austro-Hungarian troops could be used on the quieter parts of the Commander-in-Chief in the East's Front. We urged very strongly that the Austro-Hungarian troops, especially the infantry, should be trained on really modern lines.

The journey to Pless was fruitless as regards any settlement of the command question, for the opposition was still too great. But G.H.Q. decided to form three divisions for the Austro-Hungarian Front from troops taken from the Western and Eastern Fronts. These were to be ready in Poland for use about the beginning of August. The desired interchange of German and Austro-Hungarian troops was begun, and we received a battle-worn Austro-Hungarian Infantry Division, which set free the 10th Landwehr Division of the 10th Army. This was immediately handed over to General von Linsingen. In the critical battle-situation a second Austro-Hungarian division, which had been placed at our disposal, could not now be withdrawn.

The Austro-Hungarian Army had arranged their reserves in such a way that at given intervals each infantry regiment had a so-called " March-Battalion," composed of reservists, assigned to it. These battalions were often attached to the regiments as fighting battalions. Regiments that had not suffered at all sometimes contained five or six battalions instead of three; whereas the strengths of others were often very low. What was wanted was an even distribution, and this was uncommonly difficult on account of the many nationalities among the Austro-Hungarian troops. National distinctions among the men were also maintained.

What was still more grave was the very inadequate training of the March-Battalions. They only served to swell our losses in prisoners. We had to take a hand in the training of these March-Battalions, and we did. We thereby discovered much

good and useful material in the ranks, but the officers, who were then still under the control of the Austro–Hungarian Command, were of poor quality, and not trained to that strict sense of duty which distinguishes our German officers.

On July 27th, we were again summoned to Pless. The news of the fall of Brody, which reached us that day, induced the Austro–Hungarian General Staff to modify their attitude to a certain extent. They agreed to let Field-Marshal von Hindenburg take over command of the whole front as far as south of Brody. The armies of General Count Bothmer and General von Pflanzer–Baltin formed already one Army Group under the Archduke Charles, with General von Seeckt as Chief of Staff. We were still under the German G.H.Q. The Archduke Charles's Group was under the Austro–Hungarian G.H.Q. as before. The Austrians could not yet make up their minds to go the whole way, but still the new arrangement offered such considerable advantages that I regarded it as a great step in the right direction.

We then returned to Kovno, where I said farewell to the place in which I had spent a happy period of quiet work, and latterly lived through such critical hours. I left many loyal colleagues behind me in the administrative services. The military staff remained unchanged.

I had first proposed to visit the Army Headquarters of the former Austrian Front, in order to form my own opinion of the situation. The position of our new headquarters had not yet been settled. There was no question of remaining in Kovno—it lay too far north. For the present we decided to live in our special train. General von Eichhorn, while retaining his command of the 10th Army, took over the command of Scholtz's Army Group and the 8th Army. The 12th Army was assigned to the command of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria.

THE EXTENDED COMMAND ON THE EAST FRONT, AUGUST, 1916

(See Fig. 8, page 223.)

I

ON the 3rd or 4th of August we were in Kowel, the head quarters of General von Linsingen. His Chief of Staff was Colonel Hell, hitherto Chief of Staff of the 10th Army. He had taken over his new duties in July, and was the right man in the right place to deal with this extraordinarily difficult situation.

The East Front had passed through another critical period. The terrific Russian offensive had burst on us, and the end of the fighting could not be foreseen. We were heavily engaged, and there was small hope of relief. There were too many troops of the oldest classes on the Eastern Front, and we did not like to place such men in the hottest corners.

While the attacks at Riga were dying down, the Russians resumed their offensive on July 23rd, north of Baranovici, where they imagined they were facing Austro-Hungarian troops and had some success. But this had since been limited by a German counter-attack.

The Russian attack, carried out with great violence on the 25th and 27th, remained without result.

The actions on the front of von Linsingen's Army Group had been continued into the second half of July. They never actually came to an end. The strain on this group was severe. The front was not firm.

The Extended Command on the East Front

On the 28th of July the big Russian offensive on the Stochod had begun, and continued with unprecedented violence until the evening of August 1st. The Russians had assembled enormously superior numbers, and continuously fed their line regardless of losses. At several points there had been very critical moments. German Landwehr had to drive the enemy out of those parts of the Austro-Hungarian lines which he had penetrated. Even the German troops were forced to give ground, as their front was thin and their losses were heavy. But we threw everything into the scale, and the front held.

The fighting had extended northwards and involved Gronau's Army Group, which, in spite of the fact that their strength was inadequate for so extended a front, put up a strong defence with exemplary coolness. They employed their few reserves with the greatest economy, and always had something in hand to support General von Linsingen's extreme left wing.

The Staff of this group naturally took a grave view of the situation, but their resolution was unshaken. There was no doubt that, despite their terrific losses, the Russians would soon resume their offensive and continue it for some time. They had plenty of men, but used them recklessly, and such tactics promised no success, even against our thin lines. The Staff of the Army Group hoped to remain master of the situation.

In Kowel I also saw General von Bernhardi, who commanded the sector along and between the railway connecting Kowel, Lutsk and Sarny. He was a born soldier, inspired with an ardent love for his country.

In the evening we were at Wladimir-Wolynsk, the headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which was in General von Linsingen's command. This army had been thoroughly stiffened with German troops. Its Commander, Colonel-General von Tertszczanski, an excitable officer, was so obsessed with the idea of Austrian "prestige" that he gave General von Linsingen a good deal of trouble. We dined with him. March-Battalions, as a guard of honour for the Field-Marshal, lined the route from the station to the mess. The men made a very favourable impression upon us.

On this occasion General Tertszczanski spoke of the behaviour of the Austro-Hungarian troops during the recent battles with remarkable frankness. The picture he gave us was anything but cheerful.

Next morning we were in Lemberg, the headquarters of the 2nd Austro-Hungarian Army. I was surprised by the beauty and German appearance of Lemberg. In this respect it formed a striking contrast to Cracow, which is characteristically Polish.

In General von Boehm-Ermolli and his Chief of Staff, General Bardolph, we found two very shrewd and clear-sighted soldiers, with whom it was a pleasure for our services to work. They had no illusions about the low powers of resistance of their troops.

At the end of July, after the Russian attacks, the Army had been withdrawn west of Brody and the upper Sereth. Both officers were delighted to hear that a mixed German division could be put at their disposal for use in the immediate future. They regarded the continuation of the enemy offensive as a certainty. We enjoyed the congenial company of the officers of this Staff for a few hours longer and left them with the feeling that they were full of confidence. But on the front, in spite of our strong positions, we anticipated a critical situation in view of the imminent Russian offensive, as we could not possibly send reserves up in time.

In Lemberg I also had a few words with General von Seeckt, who took a serious view of the position of the Archduke Charles' Group, especially south of the Dniester.

The Russians had thrust hard against the line west of Tlumacz-Ottynia, and in places reached the crest of the Carpathians between the Tartar Pass and the frontier of Rumania.

The fate of the Archduke Charles' Group was a matter of life and death to us. The grave position in which it stood was naturally of the greatest concern to us. If this group retired any further south of the Dniester the left wing, and then the right, of the extended Eastern Front would be carried back with it. We had continually to allow for the situation of this Group. We gave it all the help we could, although it was not under our command.

The 1st Infantry Division, which had already fought in the Carpathians in the winter of 1915, was now, by order of our G.H.Q., on its way through Hungary to this sector. I should have preferred to have it north of the Carpathians, as there was little chance that the Russians would attempt to envelop our extreme right wing from the Carpathians between our front and Moldavia. Their communications behind their line were much too bad, and this danger could never become serious, It would always be possible to meet it in time, despite the incredible railway communications in Hungary. But the Austrian General Staff, at Teschen feared a Russian invasion of Hungary, and their cries for help proved stronger than military considerations.

On the return journey to Brest-Litovsk, where we intended to remain for the present in our train, we discussed matters with General von der Marwitz and General Litzmann, who now commanded mixed German and Austro-Hungarian troops in Linsingen's Army Group. They regarded their position, if the Russians resumed their attacks—and this they anticipated—as very grave, basing their fears on their experiences in recent actions. Both General von der Marwitz and General Litzmann were splendid soldiers and fearless leaders who had the well-being and efficiency of their men very much at heart.

We heard the same story everywhere. The situation in the East remained as critical as ever.

I had set myself the double task of consolidating the front and training the troops of the Austro-Hungarian Army. What measure of success I should have was doubtful.

II

Our headquarters in the train in Brest-Litovsk station was anything but ideal. We were really very poorly housed. There was no room to work. The big maps alone took a lot of space, to say nothing of our clerical staff. The way in which Lieut.-Colonel Hoffmann made the most of what he called his " salon "

was a source of continuous amazement. The other officers had even less room, and on top of all this, the sun beat pitilessly down on the roofs of the carriages and made our stay unendurable. I decided, therefore, to leave the train as soon as possible, and suggested to the Field-Marshal that we should find quarters in Brest-Litovsk itself. The members of the Staff had a mild shock. The town had been burnt to the ground and was out of the question; the citadel was a little prison. The Commandant of the fortress had made it his residence and fixed up his officers there, but labour had been too scarce for him to make it really suitable. The whole place was neglected and overgrown, for nothing had been done for a long time past. Nettles had grown to a tremendous height and the air was damp and musty. The barracks were still there, but there was not a stick of furniture. But this was nothing; we had to decide something.

I made arrangements for our headquarters to be established in the citadel. Of course, it took a considerable time before everything was ready and we could leave the train.

I liked being in Brest and did not leave the citadel. The remarkably fine tall willows, with their boughs drooping into the water which flowed through the citadel, and the few short avenues, gave the whole a pleasant aspect. Desolation reigned outside the fortress. The ugly but highly important railway junction and the gutted town offered few attractions.

I had the barracks cleared of the invading creepers, so that the air could get to the walls and dry out the damp; trees were also felled and branches lopped to allow the sun and air to get in. I took pleasure in putting things to rights.

German troops were needed to stiffen the Austro-Hungarian Front. The old front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East had already been so heavily drawn upon that no further demands could be made upon it for the time being.

The heavy attack south of Riga had just been repulsed, but it was quite likely to be renewed.

We released a few cavalry regiments, a mixed division, about three battalions strong, and some batteries under General Melior.

We had already promised these to the Austro-Hungarian Army, and they were immediately dispatched. Our only reserve for a front of about one thousand kilometres now consisted of but one Cavalry Brigade, strengthened by artillery and machine guns—certainly not an enviable position, considering that we had to prepare at any moment to send help to any point of an enormous front. This is but one further example of what we Germans achieved. The Cavalry Brigade was also destined for the Austro-Hungarian Army, and was to be attached to Melior's detachment.

Our G.H.Q. had further forces at its disposal for use in the East. The Turkish 15th Corps was coming. Enver had decided, in view of the critical position in the East, to send an Army Corps from the Constantinople district to the East Front. The German G.H.Q. intended to strengthen Linsingen's Group with this Corps. The billeting officers were actually on the scene at the beginning of August, when the situation of the Archduke Charles' Group determined G.H.Q. to deflect the Turkish Corps, which had only a few trains at its disposal, to East Galicia. The Turks fought well with the German Southern Army, although they had to learn and practise what to them were entirely novel methods of warfare.

The formation of the three divisions which G.H.Q. had ordered in July for the East was nearly complete, and I should have been glad to have had them at my disposal at once. G.H.Q. did not consent, as it did not consider them fit for action yet. A few days later, however, two were handed over to us, while the third was attached to the Archduke Charles' Group.

The Russians had by this time realized that they could do nothing against the German front, and did not again attack north of the Pripet. They intensified their pressure in Wolhynia and East Galicia, and brought up fresh forces to these points. Even in the first half of August their attacks here were resumed.

On the 8th and 9th of August the Russians again attacked Linsingen's Group and the right wing of Gronau's Group along their whole front and were repulsed. Even if the main offensive had come to an end, severe fighting was still in progress, especially

along the Stochod east and north-east of Kowel. The Russians succeeded in gaining a footing in a few places on the western bank. This was not in itself of decisive importance, but it made things very difficult for Linsingen's Group, which was being taxed to the uttermost and suffering heavy losses. It compelled us to detrain our cavalry at Kowel.

Simultaneously with the attack on Kowel, Russian attacks against the 2nd Austro-Hungarian Army and the Archduke Charles' Group in Galicia met with success. The right wing of the Austro-Hungarian Army was broken through at Zaloscz; Melior's Detachment prevented the worst, but the front was so rickety that we withdrew it to Zborow. The two new divisions placed at our disposal were put under General von Eben, commanding the 1st Corps, and they just sufficed ultimately to hold the Zborow sector in severe and prolonged fighting. They had come too late to defend the Sereth sector.

When this was abandoned by the Right Wing of the 2nd Army, the Left Wing of Bothmer's Army, which had until then stood its ground, had to retreat also. South of the Dniester, at Tlumacz, the Russians had again attacked the Austro-Hungarian troops, thrown them back and taken Stanislau and Nadworna. Here their attacks had been victorious, but in the Carpathians the German troops, under General von Conta—including the 1st Infantry Division—had denied them any success.

I considered it of the highest importance that we should not suffer reverses in Galicia, in view of their effect on Rumania. But the withdrawal of General Count Bothmer's Army, notwithstanding its stout and prolonged resistance, was unavoidable in view of events south of the Dnieper.

It withdrew, keeping touch with the Austro-Hungarian Army to the Zborow-Brzeszany line behind the Zlota Lipa, and bent its right wing in the direction of Stanislau. So, in the middle of August the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Army seemed manifestly possible. The attitude of Rumania grew ever more doubtful.

From the middle of August onwards the new front, under

the control of the Commander-in-Chief in the East, began to hold.

The 2nd Austro–Hungarian Army, which, after all, now received our Cavalry Reserve from Kowel, was placed in support at Brody. It was also so stiffened with German troops that its positions could be regarded as secure. As far as numbers are concerned, the Austro–Hungarian troops would have been quite able to hold their positions without German help. But that was impossible in their present condition, and we had to come to the rescue. We helped as much as we could, but the losses of the German troops with the Austro–Hungarian Army could never be made good.

Linsingen's Army Group was endeavouring to bring order into its units and form reserves. We sent this Group the 1st Landwehr Division from Mitau, which the Russians were leaving in great numbers.

The construction of positions was pushed on, and in this connection we had to supply the 2nd Austro–Hungarian Army with a great deal of barbed wire. The rear communications were also organized. It was a case of doing everything we had done further north in the previous autumn, when the armies of the Commander-in-Chief in the East took to trench warfare after our offensive ended. The conditions of trench construction were similar. We had to start everything from the beginning.

Of course, the establishment of a railway network was, on the whole, easier, for whereas the front was then advancing beyond its communications, it was now being forced back on them. All the same, there was a great deal to be done on the Austro–Hungarian railway system: new lines had to be begun and a network of field and light railways constructed close behind the front.

Special line of communication arrangements had to be made in Lemberg for the German divisions in the 2nd Austro–Hungarian Army, and the same applied to Hungary for the divisions fighting in the Carpathians.

We made a beginning with the training of the March-Formations on our own principles, and they were to be inspected by

German Generals. Colonel Prince Oscar of Prussia, who was responsible for the training of the Austrian March-battalions in the German Southern Army, did very valuable work.

German Artillery Brigade-Commanders taught the Austro-Hungarian artillery, which stood very high as regards the technical side of its work, the conduct of an artillery action as required in great modern battles. We initiated the practice, though on a small scale, of exchanging officers. Nothing was left undone that could possibly help to prevent any further reverses to the Austro-Hungarian Army, such as we had witnessed in June.

There were very many matters, great and small, to be attended to, and the time spent in the citadel of Brest-Litovsk passed quickly.

On August 27th, Rumania declared war on Austria-Hungary. The Dual Monarchy thereby reaped the reward of Hungary's selfish policy, and we the fruit of our passive acquiescence.

On the 28th, at one o'clock in the afternoon, the Chief of the Military Cabinet, General von Lyncker, telephoned Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and myself that His Majesty the Kaiser commanded our presence in Pless at once.

That same day, at four p.m., we left Brest, never again to return to the Eastern Front. Behind us lay two years of strenuous, united work and mighty victories.

FIRST QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL, AUGUST 29th, 1916, TO OCTOBER 26th, 1918.

THE ENTENTE OFFENSIVE, AUTUMN, 1916.

(MAPS VII. and VIII.)

I

GENERAL VON LYNCKER received us on our arrival in Pless, about ten o'clock in the morning of August 29th. He informed me that Field-Marshal von Hindenburg had been appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, and that I was to be Second Chief. The title " First Quartermaster-General " seemed to me more appropriate. In my opinion there could only be one Chief of the General Staff; but, in any case, I had been expressly assured that I should have joint responsibility in all decisions and measures that might be taken.

When His Majesty received us, he expressed the hope that the crisis at the Front would be overcome and the Imperial Chancellor, who was present in Pless at the time, spoke to the same effect. The subject of peace was not touched on by him. The gravity of the situation must have often brought it to mind. The enemy's intentions prevented any steps being taken.

My position was a thankless one, as I fully realized. I entered on my duties with a sacred desire to do and think of nothing that did not contribute to bring the war to a victorious end. For this purpose alone had the Field-Marshal and I been called upon. The task was perfectly enormous. The awful feeling of responsibility did not leave me for a single instant. The field of action was in many respects entirely new and uncommonly

comprehensive. The amount of work involved was quite unprecedented. Never before has Fate suddenly placed so heavy a burden on human shoulders. With bowed head I prayed God the All-Knowing to give me strength for my new office.

The circumstances in which the Field-Marshal and I had been summoned to take supreme command were extremely critical. Whereas we had hitherto been able to conduct our great war of defence by that best means of waging war—the offensive—we were now reduced to a policy of pure defence.

The Entente had gathered up all their strength for a mighty and, as they thought, last great blow, thrown us on the defensive and brought Rumania into the field.

It was to be expected that the attacks on the Western Front, in Italy, Macedonia and south of the Pripet would be intensified, while the Rumanians, reinforced by Russians, would burst into Transylvania on our exposed right flank, or invade Bulgaria from the Dobrudjá. Somewhere or other we were to receive our death-blow.

We also had to reckon on increased enemy activity in the Asiatic theatre. We were engaged in a battle of Titans, unparalleled in history. Our nerves and muscles braced themselves instinctively, for it was a question of saving the Fatherland from a position of extreme peril, as we had done at Tannenberg and in the operations around Lodz in less complicated but no less serious circumstances. At the moment I could not then fully appreciate how severely Rumania's entrance into the war would affect us economically. The critical military decisions we took in September were not dictated by that aspect of affairs.

In this death-grapple Germany and her Allies had been cut off from the world by a monstrous conspiracy and thrown back upon their own resources; they were facing the great military Powers of Europe who had the whole world at their disposal.

After the failure of the first great blow against France in 1914, there had been no change in the situation and Field-Marshal von Moltke's prophetic words of May 14th, 1890, had become a fact:

"If the War, which for more than ten years has been hanging over our heads like the sword of Damocles—if this War ever comes, its duration and end cannot be foretold. The greatest Powers of Europe will oppose one another, armed as they have never been before. Not one of them could be so completely overthrown in one or two campaigns that it would be compelled to admit defeat and declare its readiness to accept the hard conditions that peace would mean, without rising again to renew the struggle within a year. It might be a Seven, it might be a Thirty Years' War. . . ."

The longer the war lasted, the more acutely we felt the overwhelming superiority of the enemy in numbers and war material.

On our side the first two years had exacted a heavy toll the flower of our fighting strength lay under the sod. But the Army was still strong and resolute and had been able to preserve, or liberate, not only the frontiers of the Fatherland, but also those of its Allies in the European theatre.

Only on the Eastern Front had we now suffered a reverse, and that because the fighting power of the Austro-Hungarian Army was still on the decline.

We had succeeded in calling a halt to our retreat there. We were to retain our power to do so, but it demanded further German help. Austria-Hungary continued to be a drain on German blood and German war industries. Her most pressing needs were coal and railway material.

The same was true of Bulgaria and Turkey, although the demand for troops was not so great; but their concern was for money, military equipment and transport material. Germans had to help everywhere. We did so, in many cases without the necessary return.

The burden on us was certainly directly relieved by our Allies. Without them the War would have been unthinkable; they did their share valiantly but considered they had a natural right to approach us with a constant succession of demands, although their efforts in no way equalled ours. The longer the war lasted the more detrimental must these constant allied claims on Germany become to the Quadruple Alliance as a

whole. The whole gigantic burden of this War lay on our shoulders.

The enemy had been constantly adding to their numbers since the beginning of the War. Italy had come in. All the Powers had created new formations and summoned all their auxiliaries to arms. Now Rumania came in against us with 250,000 men. So, despite the adhesion of Bulgaria and Turkey to our cause, and the constant additions to and changes in our war machinery, we were still greatly inferior in numbers. We had six millions at the front against ten millions of the enemy.

The equipment of the Entente armies with war material had been carried out on a scale hitherto unknown. The Battle of the Somme showed us every day how great was the advantage of the enemy in this respect.

When we added to this the hatred and immense determination of the Entente, their starvation-blockade or strangle-hold, and their mischievous and lying propaganda, which was so dangerous for us, it was quite obvious that our victory was inconceivable unless Germany and her Allies threw into the scale everything they had, both in man-power and industrial resources, and unless every man who went to the front took with him from home a resolute faith in victory and an unshakable conviction that the German Army must conquer for the sake of the Fatherland. The soldier on the battle-field, who endures the most terrible strain that any man can undergo, stands, in his hour of need, in dire want of this moral reinforcement from home, to enable him to stand firm and hold out at the front.

In the situation in which the Field-Marshal and I found ourselves, and in view of our whole conception of the character of this war and the enemy's determination to destroy us, we considered it essential to develop the economic, physical and moral strength of the Fatherland to the highest degree.

G.H.Q.'s demands on the Imperial Government comprised man-power, war material and moral resolution.

We endeavoured, as far as we could, to influence our Allies in the same sense. Austria had already raised the age limit of the Landsturm to fifty-five, and Turkey raised the limit of

liability to service to fifty. So they made the utmost use of their man-power—on paper, at any rate.

In such a situation G.H.Q. must devote more attention than ever to the question of using the resources of the occupied territories.

These were the definite changes made by G.H.Q. for the future.

The Chief of the Naval Staff advocated unrestricted submarine warfare, which would apply to neutral ships also in the Barred Zone. That was the most effective assistance that the Navy could render the Army in its desperate struggle.

It was doubtful whether the enemy's naval forces would again give battle; an attempt to bring it on had been made in August, but without result. Enemy minefields progressively restricted the freedom of movement of our High Seas Fleet, and limited its use.

The question of the unrestricted U-boat war was discussed as early as August 30th at the request of the Imperial Chancellor.

It was a matter of immediate concern to the Field-Marshal and myself that any part of our Naval forces should simply lie idle in this contest of nations. It was not enough help for the Army merely to keep the Baltic open and contribute the Naval Corps in Flanders, while the operations of the Entente received decisive assistance from their Navy. Only with extreme regret could we refuse to pronounce in favour of unrestricted submarine warfare on the ground that, in the opinion of the Imperial Chancellor, it might possibly lead to war with Denmark and Holland. We had not a man to spare to protect ourselves against these States, and even if their armies were unaccustomed to war, they were in a position to invade Germany, and give us our death-blow. We should have been defeated before the effects, promised by the Navy, of an unrestricted U-boat campaign could have made themselves felt.

The discussion, however, afforded an opportunity of overhauling our defensive arrangements on the Danish and Dutch frontiers. The Northern Command at Hamburg was instructed

to fortify these frontier lines. The Governor-General in Brussels was asked to hurry on, as much as available labour permitted, the construction of fortified lines on the Belgian frontier, with which a beginning had already been made.

II

On the Western Front the Verdun battle was dying down, and in the early days of July the battle on the Somme had not brought the Entente the break-through they hoped for.

The second battle of attrition of the year 1916 had since then been in full swing on both banks of the Somme, and was raging with unprecedented fury and without a moment's respite.

Verdun had exacted a very great price in blood. The position of our attacking troops grew more and more unfavourable. The more ground they gained the deeper they plunged into the wilderness of shell-holes, and apart from actual losses in action, they suffered heavy wastage merely through having to stay in such a spot, not to mention the difficulty of getting up supplies over a wide, desolate area. The French enjoyed a great advantage here, as the proximity of the fortress gave them a certain amount of support. Our attacks dragged on, sapping our strength. The very men who had fought so heroically at Verdun were terrified of this shell-ravaged region. The Command had not their hearts in their work. The Crown Prince had very early declared himself in favour of breaking off the attack.

When the Battle of the Somme began the Entente had a tremendous superiority, both on land and in the air. G.H.Q. was surprised at first. Reinforcements were quickly thrown in, but it had never succeeded in wiping out the enemy's superiority in artillery, munitions and aircraft, even to a limited extent.

The Entente troops had worked their way further and further into the German lines. We had heavy losses in men and material. At that time the front lines were still strongly held. The men took refuge in dug-outs and cellars from the enemy's artillery fire. The enemy infantry, coming up behind their barrage, got into

the trenches and villages before our men could crawl out from their shelters. A continuous yield of prisoners to the enemy was the result. The strain on physical and moral strength was

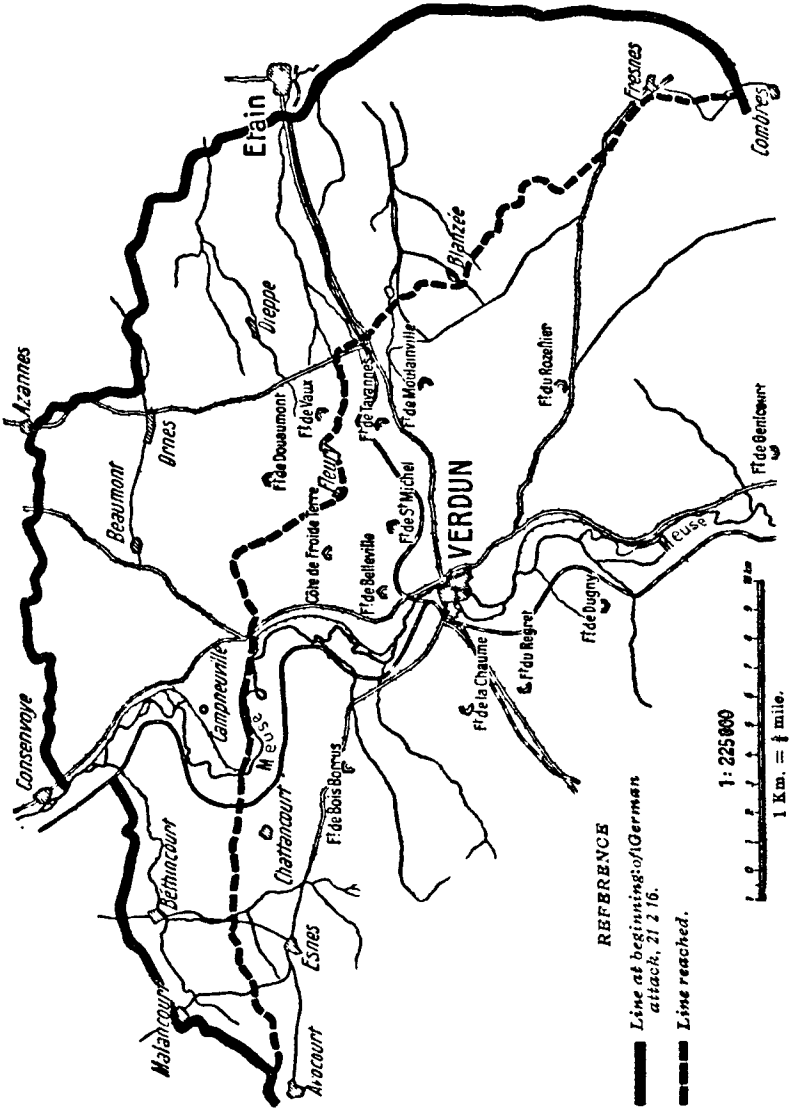


Fig. 9. Verdun, 1916.

tremendous and divisions could only be kept in the line for a few days at a time. They had to be frequently relieved and sent to recuperate on quiet fronts. It was impossible to leave

them behind the line—we had not enough men. The number of available divisions was shrinking. In view of the shortage of artillery it was now kept in the line, even when the divisions were relieved. Divisions which were released by battle-worn divisions had, in turn, to leave their artillery behind them and come up behind the battle-front. The result was that units were hopelessly mixed up.

The supply of ammunition was steadily getting shorter. G.H.Q. received the ammunition from the War Office in the form of ammunition trains, which I myself distributed daily amongst the armies. I was always hearing what they required, and knew how little I could give them. Mine was indeed a sad and harassing task.

The situation on the Western Front gave cause for greater anxiety than I had anticipated, but at that time I did not realize its full significance. It was just as well. Otherwise I should never have had the courage to take the important decision to transfer still more divisions from the heavily-engaged Western Front to the Eastern, in order to recover the initiative there and deal Rumania a decisive blow.

The Field-Marshal and I intended, as soon as conditions allowed, to go to the Western Front to see for ourselves how matters really stood there. Our task was to organize a stiffer defence and advise generally. But before we went there, some divisions were got ready for Rumania and H.M. the Emperor was induced to give the momentous order for the cessation of the offensive at Verdun. That offensive should have been broken off immediately it assumed the character of a battle of attrition. The gain no longer justified the losses. On the defensive we had only to hold out in a battle of attrition forced upon us.

On the Italian Front, too, the situation had become worse. In the north, the Austrian troops as early as July retired to the heights north of the Asiago–Arsiero line, and in the course of a further Isonzo battle in August had to abandon positions they had long held. Gorizia and, south of it, the Doberdo portion of the Carso Plateau were left in the hands of the Italians.

Here, too, the fighting power and resolution of the Austrian Army had diminished. General von Conrad, whom we saw very shortly afterwards, said that the Army had already protected the frontier for one and a quarter years and would continue to do so. More he could not say. This in itself was not particularly cheering.

Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria had taken over the command of the German East Front. I had asked that Lieut.-Colonel Hoffmann might be given my former position, for I knew that in that case the work would continue on the same lines. The Army Group which the Prince had commanded hitherto was transferred to General von Woyrsch, who kept his own army as well. We anticipated further fighting there with a certain sense of security, although the crisis, especially as regards Lin singen's Group, was not by any means over. .

The Archduke Charles's Group had not yet been able to make a stand, and a further retreat was only to be expected.

When Rumania declared war, the Carpathians assumed a new importance. The movement to envelop our southern wing was no longer restricted to the space between the Dniester and Mol davia. It now had the whole of Rumania for its starting-point and could become extremely effective.

Austria–Hungary had done nothing to protect her right flank and Transylvania, either in peace or war. The railway system was inadequate and the capacity of the few existing lines extremely small. Fortifications had not been erected, in order not to "irritate" Rumania. But Austria–Hungary herself had calmly looked on whilst Rumania built works on Transylvanian soil close to the frontier.

At the eleventh hour weak forces were hastily concentrated there and battalions formed of miners. But there were yawning gaps everywhere. In the north Russian as well as Rumanian troops pushed their way across the frontier of Moldavia, and in Wallachia up the Danube into Transylvania and Hungary. The important mountain passes fell into the enemy's hands without a shot being fired. Kronstadt and Petroszeny, with their coal mines, were occupied as early as the 29th of August

Rumanian patrols were soon seen in Hermannstadt. Orsova was taken by the enemy. If the Rumanians' advance were not stopped, not only would Archduke Charles's Army Group be enveloped, but the way into the heart of Hungary and to our lines of communication with the Balkan Peninsula would be open. That would mean our defeat.

We were now faced with the difficult problem of holding both the Western and Eastern Fronts against all hostile attacks, supporting Archduke Charles's Group, and effecting a concentration against Rumania, which would be not merely a guarantee of defence but enable us to pass to the offensive. The execution of this task was made all the more difficult by the appeals of the Archduke Charles's Group for reinforcements which ought really to have been sent to Transylvania.

G.H.Q. found itself compelled to withdraw more and more divisions from other fronts. The concentration against Rumania was deferred. Not a single man more could be spared from the Western Front. The Commander-in-Chief in the East received instructions to withdraw units from various points of his already thinly-held front, and to form new divisions. Everything was staked on our decision to make the most of our superior mobility in comparison to the Entente and deal with Rumania in one great strategic manœuvre; but how and when this could be accomplished could not be seen at the beginning of September.

The first step to be taken in the execution of our plans was to bring our whole front to a standstill on both sides of the Carpathians, from the left to the right wing. The front had to be extended into Transylvania, approximately along the river Maros above and below Maros Vasarhely, whilst we attacked the Rumanians from Bulgaria, although we were not in strength there, in accordance with the plan of the former Chief of the General Staff.

After the campaign against Serbia had been brought to an end, Field-Marshal von Mackensen handed over the command of the Bulgarian–Macedonian Front to the Bulgarian General Staff, although he himself remained in the Balkans. When relations with Rumania became increasingly acute he had made

preparations for the opening of hostilities, and on the 28th of August had taken over command of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Ottoman troops on the Danube and the Dobrudja frontier. The only forces he had at his disposal were: west of Orsova, the Austrian Danube flotilla, very weak Bulgarian Landsturm of the older classes, employed in watching the Danube; at Rustchuk, Colonel Bode's mixed German detachment, drawn from the German troops in Macedonia, and a Bulgarian infantry division. Other weak Bulgarian forces were posted to the east of the railway line from Bulgaria into the Dodrubja. Several heavy German batteries and a Turkish division were on their way, but only at the rate of two to four trains a day, as the railways of northern Bulgaria could not cope with more.

Bulgaria's attitude to Rumania was most uncertain. While Germany and Turkey declared their solidarity with their Allies immediately after Rumania's declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria did not think fit to do so until the 1st of September. She made no definite stipulations as to her reward for her military assistance, such as the cession of the whole of the Dobrudja. At that time the situation on the Macedonian Front was responsible for a certain reserve on Bulgaria's part.

According to the arrangements arrived at between General von Falkenhayn and the Allies, Field-Marshal von Mackensen was to cross the Danube in the direction of Bucharest with the troops under his command. General von Conrad had favoured this operation whole-heartedly, because he thought it promised corresponding relief in Transylvania. The outcome of this movement might mean the defeat of Field-Marshal von Mackensen's weak army, either on the northern bank of the Danube or by an advance of the Rumanians and Russians over the Dobrudja frontier, which at that time was insufficiently protected. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and I rejected this plan, and advocated the invasion of the Dobrudja by Field-Marshal von Mackensen. This would also be the best means of parrying a possible thrust into Bulgaria from the Dobrudja. The idea of crossing the Danube could only be considered when the

operations against the Rumanian armies in Transylvania made further progress. Later events proved how dangerous this crossing was. General von Conrad accepted the altered plans reluctantly, the Bulgarians very readily, for the Dobrudja was calling. Enver of course agreed.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen received instructions accordingly. While the situation on the northern Rumanian Front was still particularly uncertain and looked dangerous, we attacked in the Dobrudja.

III

The bulk of the Bulgarian Army was on the Greek frontier. They were stiffened by German staffs, about one German division, and other German troops, particularly artillery and machine-gun, telephone and flying units. Further, Bulgaria received from us, and in a considerably less degree from Austria-Hungary, money and plenty of war material. The Bulgarian railways were far from efficient. We had to take drastic steps to improve their working condition.

The Entente had conveyed to Salonika the reorganized Serbian Army, as well as forces of their own, but had remained inactive. General Sarrail had been appointed Commander-in-Chief and marked his entry into office by laying a strong hand on Greece and forming units of Venizelist troops. In Albania Austro-Hungarian forces had been stationed since the spring west of Lake Ochrida, south of Berat, and on the lower Vojusa. The Italians had occupied Valona, and extended their bridge-head into northern Epirus, which had been annexed by Greece.

However, the Entente front between the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean was not yet continuous. We were in touch with Greece by the very difficult Koritza route, but this was of no value. Greece was so firmly in the grip of the Entente, and so dependent on them for her very existence, that no one could seriously think it possible to win her over to us.

The Bulgarian Army, and Bulgaria herself, were willing to

continue the war just so long as it furthered their national ambition to become the chief power in the Balkans. For this the Bulgarian Army was fighting. It had not, it is true, yet completely recovered from the effects of the two Balkan wars. No military action was to be expected from Bulgaria in any other allied theatre of war.

When Turkey joined Germany in 1914, Bulgaria had, as the price of her neutrality, demanded Turkish territory on the right bank of the Maritza and a belt ten kilometres wide on the left bank, from Adrianople to the sea. In return for her entry into the war against Serbia, she laid claim to Serbian territory, and, in the event of Rumania joining in, she demanded the whole of the so-called Bulgarian Dobrudja, which had been ceded to Rumania by the Peace of Bucharest in 1913. Agreements made in the autumn of 1915 regarding the co-operation of German and Austro-Hungarian troops only applied to the Serbian campaign, and no longer held good. The territory conquered in that campaign had been placed under the jurisdiction of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. The dividing line was, approximately, the river Morava from its confluence to Pristina-Prizrend, and then the course of the river Drina.

The Headquarters Staff of the German 11th Army on the Macedonian Front controlled the sector on both sides of the river Vardar. Here was the bulk of the German troops, though we had detachments on other parts of the front. The Line-of-Communications-Inspectorate was at Nish. We had not kept for ourselves one line-of-communication area in Serbian territory. Only the railways were under our administration. We may thus have avoided political difficulties, but the German troops had to suffer considerable inconvenience as a result of our moderation. Incorporated in the Bulgarian Army as they were, they did not meet with that assistance which they had a right to expect so far away from home and which, indeed, the Bulgarians had expressly pledged themselves to render in many matters. The German soldier, with his keener insight, fought on the Macedonian Front just as devotedly as he had done on the Western and Eastern Fronts. He knew that even in the

Balkan Peninsula he was defending his own home. Neither the Bulgarian people nor the Bulgarian Army were ripe for such a lofty view. They did not even grasp it when German troops were taken from the Macedonian Front in an endeavour to force a decision elsewhere.

Even before the Rumanian storm-cloud broke, the Bulgarian General Staff had decided to take the offensive in the direction of Salonika. This was quite a sound plan from a military point of view. Holding the line of the Struma, with one flank resting on the sea, the Bulgarian left wing would be considerably safer than in its positions along the frontier. The district east of the Struma was occupied on August 27th without serious fighting, as the Greek 4th Army Corps, stationed there, offered no resistance and quietly looked on while the Bulgarian troops marched past. This corps remained in the neighbourhood of Drama and Kavala. The German G.H.Q. immediately ordered our liaison officer to take charge of these troops. They soon placed themselves at our disposal and, with their own consent, were taken to Görlitz for internment there.

All danger to the rear of the Bulgarian Army had now been removed. Entente troops were on the line of the Struma. The Bulgarians did not advance any further, as their main thrust via Florina had meanwhile failed. The Bulgarians had crossed the Greek frontier at this point on the 19th of August, with the *massif* of the Malka Nidze, east of Florina, which was held by the Serbs, as their first objective. The lower slopes were carried by surprise, but the main attack was repulsed by a violent Serbian counter-attack. The Bulgarian losses were heavy. Their offensive and their spirit collapsed together. The Tsar of Bulgaria and Radoslavoff, who were in Pless at the beginning of September, were full of laments and demanded German troops. Our Government strongly supported them in this, against our wishes, and also urged an abatement of Bulgaria's debt to Germany, a matter which I did not at that time fully realize, because it did not concern me.

It would have been contrary to sound conduct of the war to yield to Bulgaria's demand for German reinforcements. From

the point of view of the war as a whole, more important matters were at stake in Transylvania. G.H.Q. refused any assistance. I found that the communications between the valley of the Vardar and the plain of Monastir were in no way adequate to supply the needs of the troops which were already there. To send more troops there would have been bad policy. Once more we had, first of all, to put matters on a sound footing, even though the Bulgarians might have to surrender a little ground. That had to be faced. We could not do everything with German troops. But G.H.Q. gave as much help as the situation permitted. The German Army Headquarters were transferred from the Vardar to the right wing, with a view to securing correct tactical handling and the adoption of thorough measures for the establishment of rear communications. German railway troops and labour battalions had to take this work into their own expert hands. This mountainous country was exceedingly difficult, and it took them many months to do what should have been done before the Florina offensive was undertaken.

General Jekoff was the Bulgarian Commander-in-Chief. He was a loyal supporter of the Alliance, but did not possess those outstanding qualities which are required of a leader in a modern war. Besides, he lacked the necessary training. His character was irreproachable, but he had not sufficient resolution to remedy various grave defects in the Bulgarian Army. He was entangled in narrow party politics and so forgot the war. His Chief of Staff at that time was Lukoff, a man of unsound judgment and an intriguer who is responsible for the misfortune of his country and the Quadruple Alliance.

I found it difficult to get a clear idea of the psychology of the Bulgarian people. They appeared to me to have strong national feeling and to be quite ready to fight for the position of first Power in the Balkans.

Radoslavoff was a Germanophile from inward conviction. He stood and fell by the Alliance. In putting forward demands on Germany and in his Greater-Bulgarian policy, he was exceedingly obstinate and gave free rein to all agitation in that direction, so that he could play off the national wishes against us. But he

forgot that in so doing he was making his own position very much more difficult for peace negotiations. He also did nothing to enlighten his people about the necessity of the war. Perhaps he did not fully realize it himself.

The Tsar of Bulgaria was just as firm a supporter of the Alliance. He was an uncommonly clever man, but a lover of skilful diplomacy rather than a man of action. He liked to have several irons in the fire and thought he could always postpone decisions. Thanks to the great ability with which he managed the Bulgarians, this policy had been good enough for peace time ; but it was not enough in war. I was particularly sorry that he was no soldier, and therefore did not exercise that influence over the Army which his high position demanded of him.

The Crown Prince Boris, excellently trained by his father, was a thoroughly soldierly personality and mature beyond his years. He had a clear understanding of military necessities. Our Staffs in Bulgaria and I myself liked dealing with him. This people cannot find a better ruler.

IV

The situation in Turkey had improved since the forces of the Entente evacuated the Gallipoli peninsula. It had now become possible for Enver Pasha to place some troops at the disposal of the German G.H.Q. He realized, quite rightly, that as far as Turkey was concerned, the war would now be decided in other theatres.

Of course, these troops had first of all to be trained, clothed and equipped. That took time. At the end of July and the beginning of August the Turkish 15th Corps had been sent to Galicia, and now an Ottoman Division was sent to the neighbourhood of Varna. Enver took these troops from the army of Marshal Liman Pasha, to whom the defence of Constantinople and the coast of Asia Minor was still committed.

The English had driven the Turks out of the Sinai peninsula They were now busy building a full-gauge railway and a pipe-

line; as soon as sufficient progress had been made with these works an enemy invasion of Palestine was to be anticipated.

The Turkish success at Kut-el-Amara had had no sequel. The English were preparing a new operation against Bagdad, and this time it looked as if it was to be carried right through. The resumption of active hostilities here was to be expected sooner or later.

Both operations were bound to succeed if the English really took their task in hand, as now appeared to be the case. But the stouter the Turkish resistance, the larger the force they would have to employ. For that reason the fighting value of the Turkish Army was a matter of the greatest importance to us. The stiffer the Turkish defence in Palestine and Mesopotamia and the larger the force absorbed in the English effort to achieve their object, the more our burden in the West would be lightened. Of course in their Indian contingents the English had troops at their disposal which they did not care to use in France, so that their employment in Asiatic Turkey did not benefit our situation in the West. All the same, it increased the military demands on the British.

The Turkish enterprises in Persia in the direction of Hamadan were merely episodes, and of no importance for the conduct of the war.

In eastern Asia Minor, west and south of the Trebizond–Erzinjan–Mush line, Russians and Turks stood facing each other, inactive. The strengths of both armies appeared to be extraordinarily low. I have never been able to find out exactly what the Turkish strength there was. We no longer anticipated any more great Russian offensives, because this theatre presented too many difficulties for Russia, as well.

The Turkish Army was exhausted. To begin with, it had not recovered from the Balkan War before it was involved in another Its wastage from disease and in action was continuously high. The trustworthy, brave Anatolian had vanished from its ranks. The unreliable Arab auxiliaries were playing an increasingly important part everywhere, but especially in Mesopotamia and Palestine. The forces were now below their paper strength and the men were badly fed and still worse equipped. The lack of

efficient officers was particularly felt. Liman Pasha, relying on his authority, endeavoured again and again to make his divisions into an efficient fighting instrument. He did all that could be done. When Turkish troops left his hands to come under German leadership, in Galicia or against Rumania for example, they behaved quite passably, and sometimes well, but where they were under a Turkish Command they soon forgot what German thoroughness had taught them.

Besides money, Turkey received from us officers and technical units, as well as war material, though the amount of this was regulated by the very limited number of trains to Constantinople which were at our disposal. Liman Pasha's divisions could not be equipped here. The further transport of war material for the troops in Palestine and Mesopotamia or the Caucasus front was also so limited, that these were only very poorly equipped. This reduced still further their fighting power, which was low enough already on account of their small numbers. We tried to increase the capacity of the Turkish railways by supplying material and technical personnel.

The Turkish Government preserved its attitude of hostility towards the other races.

In spite of my entreaties, Turkey made no serious attempt to break with her old policy towards the Arabs. In any case, perhaps it would have been too late. English gold did the rest. The Arabs turned more and more against the Turks. It was a miracle that Turkey was able to hold the Hedjaz railway and Medina almost to the end of the war.

At the beginning of September, Enver, too, came to Pless He was a very gifted man and made an unusual impression on us. He was a true friend of Germany and there was a bond of warm sympathy between us. He had a real military instinct for the art of war, but he lacked both the knowledge of first principles and professional qualifications. Nor had he received a thorough training. His great military ability had no chance to develop His sending Turkish troops to Galicia and against the Rumanians proved his sound military judgment. On the other hand, he was always clamouring for war material on a scale that could not

possibly be supplied. The majority of the available trains to Turkey via Sofia were used for coal, which was sent from Upper Silesia to Constantinople. Over and over again I begged Enver, the very distinguished Talaat, and other Turkish high officials, who visited us, to increase their home output of coal, which appeared perfectly possible. If they had, there would have been more transport space for war material. I discussed with them the great importance of railways in warfare, and showed them how Turkey could help herself in this respect. I made little impression on them and they certainly showed no disposition to accept my suggestions. They continued to assail me with their demands, although it was plain that no notice could be taken of them. Turkey did practically nothing to improve the working of her coal mines and railways.

The Young Turks were firmly in power in Constantinople.

The people themselves held aloof.

When I took up my new duties, the outlook in Turkey was far from reassuring. I could only think with apprehension of Mesopotamia and Palestine.

V

Wherever personal discussion was impossible, *liaison* with our Allies was assured by Military Representatives. The German General von Cramon was responsible for communication between ourselves and the Austro-Hungarian G.H.Q., and he fulfilled his often difficult task with extraordinary skill and great personal tact. Thanks to him our relations with the Austro-Hungarian G.H.Q. became steadily more intimate. The Austro-Hungarian Military Representative at the German G.H.Q., Lieutenant Field-Marshal von Klepsch, kept more in the background. He was also an exceptionally gifted man, who contributed largely to avoidance of misunderstandings, and was always ready to work with us in the spirit of unshakable comradeship.

Our dealings with Bulgaria passed in the main through the hands of Colonel (late General) Gantscheff, the Bulgarian

Representative at our Headquarters. He was an uncommonly skilful and clever personality, who represented Bulgarian interests most efficiently, without losing the wider point of view. He was a loyal friend of the Alliance, and later, on the King's abdication, accompanied him to Germany. The German Military Representative in Sofia, Colonel von Massow, who stood very well with the Tsar, was often called in to aid, and had continually to smooth away the difficulties to which the peculiar character of the Bulgarians so easily gave rise.

The Turkish Military Representative, Lieut.-General Zeki Pasha, an Ottoman of high rank and a loyal friend of Germany, was a remarkably skilful and tactful upholder of his army's interests. The German Representative in Constantinople, General von Lossow, was particularly well-informed on Turkish subjects, and a personal friend of Enver Pasha. Naturally, we frequently had recourse to his services. As the Chief of Staff at the Turkish G.H.Q. was a German—first, General Bronsart von Schellendorf, and subsequently General von Seeck—relations with this body were naturally particularly intimate.

When the Field-Marshal and I arrived at Pless, the question was just being mooted of the establishment of a single command for the Quadruple Alliance in all tactical and strategical matters. I warmly advocated it and had the pleasure of seeing it carried out soon afterwards. The final decision lay with His Majesty, who gave permission to the Field-Marshal to do everything " By Order of His Majesty." In practice the actual control was limited ; we had no definite knowledge of the quality of our Allies' troops, and were thus unable, for example, to direct that only so many troops should be retained on Austria's Italian frontier. In practice we generally came to some mutual arrangement, but the directions issued by the German G.H.Q. carried with them a certain authority which proved to be of great utility.

The Field-Marshal and I had, accordingly, the conduct of operations in the West, and in the East as far as the Dobrudja in the south. With regard to the Rumanian campaign, it was necessary to come to an arrangement with our Allies, and in particular with Austria-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Head-

quarters Staff in Teschen had under its command the Army Group of the Archduke Charles and the troops that were now moving into Transylvania. They depended, however, so largely on the measures we ourselves were about to take, that the assumption of the single command by our G.H.Q. made no difference whatever in fact.

The Italian and Albanian fronts were the exclusive sphere of General von Conrad.

Conditions in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey demanded our closest attention, but we could not have the final voice there.

One result of the establishment of the single command was that the General Staffs of the various Allies had recourse to us whenever disagreements broke out between them. In Balkan questions, the Bulgarian G.H.Q. was very reluctant to have any direct dealing with Turkey or Austria-Hungary, while the latter, in its turn, preferred to deal with us rather than with Bulgaria.

VI

His Majesty the Emperor was Supreme War Lord. In him resided the ultimate authority over the Army and Navy. The Commanders-in-Chief of the land and sea forces were responsible to him.

Subject to His Majesty's pleasure, the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army had full control of the direction of operations. Decisions of the first importance required His Majesty's approval. He had no executive authority.

The Emperor was thus the head of General Headquarters. I may mention that, when I use this latter expression in these Memoirs in the narrower sense as referring to the General Staff of the Army in the field, I do so in accordance with the current, though incorrect, practice.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, as the director of operations at sea, had the same status as the Chief of the General Staff of the field Army. As regards such operations he had the same rights

and duties. The General Staff and the Naval Staff have always worked well together.

The Governors-General in Brussels and Warsaw were directly responsible to His Majesty, and took their directions from the Chancellor in matters of policy. In military questions they took directions from G.H.Q.—on one occasion it proved necessary to obtain an order from His Majesty when we wanted some horses from the Warsaw Government.

The other occupied territories fell under the administration of the Quartermaster-General, and thus under G.H.Q. The real authorities in these areas were the Army Head Quarter Staffs.

The Ministries of War of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Würtemberg ranked equal to ourselves. They had their Representatives at G.H.Q., in the person of the Military Representatives of the separate contingents. The Bavarians were always changing their representative. Latterly General von Hartz, and after him General Köberle, held the position. Saxony and Würtemberg were represented by Generals von Eulitz and von Graevenitz, the latter being afterwards succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel Holland. The other function of these officers was to uphold the interests of their own armies as against G.H.Q. It must be clear that not even in the German Army was jealousy wholly non-existent. If any difficulties arose in any part of the field, one national contingent was at times disposed to lay the blame on another. At one time there would be complaints of too heavy losses, at another of too little opportunity to shine. There were also personal questions to be settled with the Military Representatives. These officers co-operated well with G.H.Q. I think I must have convinced them that I attended to their interests in an impartial spirit. I have never made any difference between the four contingents. They all did their duty and all had their good and less good divisions. Würtemberg alone had only good ones. The Baden Divisions deserve the same praise, although they did not form a separate contingent. In spite of the variety of the peoples composing it, the Army held together well. It was only after a long period

of nerve-racking toil that a certain spirit of hostility manifested itself between the Bavarians and the Prussians. And this never applied to officers of higher rank.

The Prussian War Ministry was represented by Major Stieler von Heydekampf, who gave me devoted assistance in my many difficult tasks.

In many directions the War Ministries complied with our requests, and I found them loyal helpers. When, however, the exigencies of war began to affect the home life of the people more and more intimately, the officials could not shake themselves free of home influences. They succumbed instead of rising superior to them, and thus failed to give the Army that moral support it so urgently needed.

I had no dealings with the General Officers Commanding the Army Corps Districts, except on questions of Patriotic Instruction. They were not under the orders of G.H.Q. Under the *Belagerungsgesetz** they were absolutely independent, and after the creation by the Reichstag of a Supreme Military Authority, in the autumn of 1916, they were made responsible to the War Ministers, as was already the case in Bavaria.

By this appointment the Prussian War Minister became of much more importance to the successful prosecution of the war. His responsibility was much greater, and he had now frankly to remind the Chancellor of his duty to strengthen *moral*, in order that that of the Army should not suffer. He had also to insist that order should be maintained at home from whatever quarter it was threatened. This was what the Army expected of the Prussian War Minister. The attitude of the Government and the law creating a Supreme Military Authority lowered the status of the G.O.C.'s of the Corps Districts. Indeed, it was the precise object of that law which was aimed primarily at them and all their works. It is true that in the interpretation of the law relating to associations and in the application of the censorship, as well as in many other matters, it was a great disadvantage to have a multiplicity of authorities,

* Literally, the "Law of the State of Siege," corresponding in some ways to our Defence of the Realm Regulations. [*Tr.*]

and must have led to considerable confusion. One common definition of the powers of the Government would have been far better. But this was wanting, and the War Minister did not succeed in supplying it. More and more, as the Chancellor yielded to party pressure, uncertainty and confusion spread from Berlin to the provinces. Independent action on the part of the G.O.C.'s of the Corps Districts became rarer and rarer. The law creating the Supreme Military Authority, which might have done good, was ultimately fatal to us.

A further authority, with which G.H.Q. had to deal as of equal status, was the Chief of the Military Cabinet, who was responsible to the Emperor alone. He worked well and conscientiously, forming his opinion simply on the reports of the Staffs. He received my views also in the case of the G.O.C.'s of Armies and the Corps Districts. Beyond this, G.H.Q. had nothing to do with personal questions, save that it was morally responsible for Officers of the General Staff, and also for the award of decorations. I should like to have seen at the head of the Military Cabinet men who had had real personal experience of the fighting, so that we could rely upon them to do justice to the Corps of Officers. As it was, this body worked too closely on the lines of its peace-time routine, and did not bring strong characters to the front.

In questions of decorations, too, the importance of which must not be underestimated, the Chief of the Military Cabinet had jurisdiction. Here, too, he relied upon the reports of the Army Headquarter Staffs. Unfortunately, too long elapsed between the recommendation and the actual grant of decorations. It was only after long and continuous pressure that G.H.Q. managed to secure the grant of a " wounded " badge.

The conduct of the war in the colonies was in the hands of the Colonial Secretary. In peace time he had not maintained close touch with the General Staff on the subject of the conduct of military operations in the colonies. In 1904 General Count von Schlieffen only obtained the control of operations in South-West Africa by a special order. The Colonial Office had not paid sufficient attention to the defensive possibilities of the colonies.

One cannot estimate too highly the benefits France has reaped from her colonies in the prosecution of the war. Especially in the summer of 1918, she carried on the fighting largely by means of coloured troops. We could never, of course, have done this, but we might have reaped greater advantage from our colonial possessions. The band of German heroes in East Africa succeeded in drawing off powerful enemy forces, which thus could not be used against Turkey, and had to be replaced to some extent by other troops, thus weakening the Western Front in the long run. I followed the campaigns in the colonies with interest, and was surprised that South-West Africa did not act with more energy. It should not have fallen so rapidly. I do not know the causes of its fall. The lack of attention of the Home Government to questions of colonial defence cannot have been the sole reason. In East Africa, in the autumn of 1917, between the Rufiji and the Rovuma, and later, on Portuguese territory until the end of the war, General von Lettow-Vorbeck gave a magnificent proof of German courage in foreign parts.

G.H.Q. and the Chancellor had equal status. Here, too, the common head was the Emperor. Our dealings with the Imperial Government were frequent, and not too pleasant. We did not meet with that spirit of accommodation which was so necessary when we told the Government what the successful prosecution of the war demanded of them, if the German people were to be rendered capable of victory.

The representation of military interests in all questions of foreign policy during the war and in connection with the conclusion of peace meant frequent dealings, and much friction also.

The machinery of government in Berlin gave the impression of being extremely clumsy.

The various departments worked side by side without any real sympathy or cohesion, and there was infinite "overlapping." The left hand often did not know what the right was doing. A Bismarck could have made these departments co-operate properly, but the task was beyond our War Chancellors.

Relations between the General Staff and the Government were improved and simplified in February, 1917, by the Chan-

cellor appointing a personal representative at G.H.Q. At first this was Under-Secretary of State von Stein, who was like a breath of fresh air all the time he was with us. In the autumn of 1917 the position was taken by Count Limburg-Stirum, a skilful and well-informed man of great patriotism. Dealing with him was a real pleasure. In much the same way Colonel (later General) von Winterfeldt represented the General Staff at the Chancellor's Department in Berlin. He worked at his difficult task with devotion and tact.

G.H.Q. had further to deal with a whole series of imperial offices, and also, in questions of communications, with the Governments of the larger States. I greatly missed the assistance of a strong imperial executive. The disadvantages of our complicated constitution were plainly evident. The desire for an Imperial Ministry of War was mentioned to me by several far-seeing Bavarian officers of high rank. I could only agree with them, and beg them to advocate that view in Bavaria.

The question of unifying the constitution of Germany is now under discussion and I trust that it may be achieved as a further step in the development of our country. It must not be forgotten, if changes are made, what Germany owes to Prussia and to the other States.

The military attachés in neutral States were at the disposal of G.H.Q., as in peace time. They were subject to the Ambassadors and did no political work. They reported any military matters direct to the General Staff, a copy of their report being supplied to the Ambassador. This method of working did not give rise to difficulties. The attachés also worked on propaganda in conjunction with the Ambassadors. In this branch of their activities they received their instructions from Colonel von Haeften.

In the allied countries our military attachés had similar tasks. Here, too, they had nothing to do with politics. Their most important duty was to act as *liaison* officers between our G.H.Q and the General Staffs of the Allied Armies.

VII

On the 5th September the Field-Marshal and I paid our first visit to the West. We travelled via Charleville, where General Headquarters had been established hitherto, to Cambrai, the headquarters of the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

The Crown Prince came to meet us on our way into Charleville. A company of the famous von Rohr Storm Battalion formed the guard of honour for the Field-Marshal. For the first time I saw a formation in full storming kit, with the steel helmets which had proved so extraordinarily useful. We had not had them in the East. The Crown Prince was greatly pleased at the abandonment of the attacks on Verdun, a course he had long and earnestly desired. He discussed other matters also, and mentioned to me his desire for peace; he did not explain how this was to be obtained from the Entente.

In Charleville the Field-Marshal saw the officers of General Headquarters. The division of G.H.Q. into two groups, and the immense distance between Pless and Charleville, had proved very inconvenient in every way. The excellent telephone and telegraph service was no substitute for personal discussion. I would have preferred to have General Headquarters entirely in the West, although not at Charleville which was not a convenient place. The German troops in France and Belgium had to bear the burden of the war in its most merciless form and our anxiety to be geographically near them was natural enough. G.H.Q. was, however, compelled to remain at Pless, as the operations in Rumania required that we should keep close touch with General von Conrad in Teschen. G.H.Q. was, therefore, moved to the East and established in Pless, Kattowitz and other towns.

The Conference in Cambrai took place on the morning of the 7th, while a violent struggle was proceeding on the Somme We were all obsessed by thoughts of that terrible conflict.

The Western Front was not at this time well organized. The

constitution of the armies into Army Groups had not yet been carried far enough. The Army Group of Crown Prince Rupprecht had been created as a result of the Somme fighting in August. It included the 6th Army before Arras, which the Crown Prince himself had hitherto commanded, and the two other armies also engaged, the 1st and 2nd, under Generals Fritz von Below and von Gallwitz. The Army Group of the German Crown Prince was of earlier origin; it consisted of the 3rd Army near Rheims, the 5th at Verdun, led by the Crown Prince himself, and the Army Detachments A and B in Alsace and Lorraine.

Not forming part of any Army Group was the 4th Army under Field-Marshal Duke Albrecht of Würtemberg, on the right wing of the Army, and the 7th Army, under Colonel-General von Schubert, between the two Army Groups. At first we decided to make no change in these arrangements, beyond putting the 7th Army in the Crown Prince Rupprecht's Group and shortly afterwards forming a special Army Group under the German Crown Prince. There were now only three sections under the direct command of G.H.Q. The wholesale reorganization of the West Front could not be undertaken until there was a pause in the fighting.

The Chief of Staff of the 4th Army, General Ilse, and Generals von Kuhl and von Lüttwitz, the Chiefs of Staff to the Crown Prince Rupprecht and the German Crown Prince's Groups, gave us a summary of events on their sectors. Colonel von Lossberg in his serious way, and Colonel Bronsart von Schellendorf with his usual vivacity, supplemented General von Kuhl's report of the Battle of the Somme with more detailed and intimate descriptions of events. The loss of ground up to date appeared to me of little importance in itself. We could stand that; but the question how this, and the progressive falling-off of our fighting power of which it was symptomatic, was to be prevented, was of immense importance. It was just as necessary to have a clear idea of our fighting capacity as to know whether our tactical views were still sound. The first was an easy matter, the second of extreme difficulty. Opinions vary

as much in strategical and tactical as in political and economic questions. It is just as difficult to carry conviction. The symptoms are recognized, but the underlying causes are the subject of controversy. In such circumstances a cure is a difficult matter. The Army is a very conservative body. It was so in peace time, and war made no difference.

My mental picture of the fighting at Verdun and on the Somme had to be painted a shade darker in view of what I had just heard. The only relief in it was the heroism of our German men, who had suffered to the extreme limit of human endurance for the sake of the Fatherland. I cannot repeat all the moving stories of the battle which I heard. The finest description of the battle has been written by a young officer of the doughty Hamburg Regiment—it is an epic in prose.

I began to realize what a task the Field-Marshal and I had undertaken in our new spheres, and what a burden we should lay on the leaders and troops in the West, if we drew on them still further for our offensive in the south-east.

On the Somme the enemy's powerful artillery, assisted by excellent aeroplane observation and fed with enormous supplies of ammunition, had kept down our own fire and destroyed our artillery. The defence of our Infantry had become so flabby that the massed attacks of the enemy always succeeded. Not only did our *moral* suffer, but in addition to fearful wastage in killed and wounded, we lost a large number of prisoners and much material.

The most pressing demands of our officers were for an increase of artillery, ammunition, aircraft and balloons, as well as larger and more punctual allotments of fresh divisions and other troops to make possible a better system of reliefs. The breaking-off of the attack on Verdun made it easier to satisfy their wishes; but even there we had to reckon in the future with considerable wastage, if only on account of the local conditions. It was possible that the French would themselves make an attack from the fortress. Verdun remained an open, wasting sore.

It would have been better to withdraw our positions out

of the crater area. At that time I had not a thorough grasp of the local difficulties of the Verdun fighting. After the Somme, the fortress still required the most attention, in spite of that the 5th Army would have to surrender a considerable amount of artillery and aircraft. The other armies would have to be dealt with still more ruthlessly. They would have to hold longer fronts and release divisions, artillery, aircraft and balloons for the battle front. Weak spots would naturally result; but we should have to put up with this, if we intended to hold on the Somme. That was imperative, as no rear lines had been prepared. G.H.Q. could at last count on a few new divisions, which were gradually got ready.

Conditions on the battle front as regards artillery and air strength were bound gradually to improve, as the more rapid reinforcement recently introduced began to have effect; only the question of munitions gave cause for anxiety, although I had already drawn heavily on other fronts.

It appeared possible, thanks to this better supply of divisions, that Rupprecht's Army Group would gradually be relieved of the necessity of living from hand to mouth. It was then to be hoped that a proper system of putting in and taking out Divisions in sequence would result. I had to attach the greatest importance to this, in consideration of the internal organization of the Army and in the interests of the men, as supply, both for men and horses, was suffering. After G.H.Q. had given help in the matter, I firmly insisted that units should not be mixed up. Hitherto this had not been possible owing to force of circumstances. This special arrangement did not get rid of the necessity of continually relieving worn-out divisions by others. A very essential, and indeed, difficult and responsible task of my Operations-Department, was to have divisions always ready which could immediately be made available for the Somme Battle. The condition of the troops had to be accurately gauged, so that we could arrange for their removal from a quiet front for service on more or less important sectors of the battle line.

The reinforcements which were released for the battle could

not be sent up to the front line in rotation. The railways were already considerably overtaxed by the ordinary traffic to and from the battle lines. An enormous number of additional trains had to be run. Two or three weeks had to pass before full effect could be given to this new arrangement. In that time all our calculations might be upset by enemy successes and new demands might have to be met. That lay in the hands of fate, not to mention the enemy. For the moment everything had been done which the stress of circumstances made at all possible.

In the province of tactics it was necessary to restore the supremacy of the aggressive function of the artillery in getting on to, and destroying, the enemy's guns and infantry before the infantry attack was launched. We had previously had to renounce this on account of our inferiority in guns and ammunition. The barrage had come to be regarded as a universal panacea. The infantry insisted on it, but unfortunately it had come to confuse many sound theories. A barrage is all very well in theory, but in practice only too often it collapses under the storm of the enemy's "Destruction Fire." Our infantry, which had come to rely on the barrage alone for protection, were far too inclined to forget that they had to defend themselves by their personal efforts.

The increase in the number of the guns and the amount of ammunition required, first essentials for an effective use of artillery, had to go hand in hand with a more resolute handling of the artillery action by the higher Staffs and by better shooting, by means of aerial observation. I and many other officers advocated that the artillery action should in general be directed by Divisions in conformity with precise orders from superior authority. This view met, of course, with opposition; it gradually came to be recognized as the only sound one. Every Divisional Commander was to have a special high artillery officer for the direction and control of this arm. The want of some such arrangement had made itself felt very deeply.

Artillery and aircraft were to co-operate more closely. The airman would have to develop a liking for artillery-ranging

work. A battle high up in the air, with a chance of high honours and a mention in Army Orders, was decidedly more exciting and wonderful than ranging for the artillery. Comprehension of the great importance of artillery-ranging work was only gradually inculcated.

As a fighting instrument for use against ground targets, aeroplanes did not then play such a systematic rôle as they did in 1917, and more particularly in 1918; but as early as the Battle of the Somme the enemy's aircraft, descending very low, played havoc with our Infantry by machine-gun fire, not so much by causing heavy casualties as by making the troops feel that they had been discovered in places which heretofore they had thought afforded safe cover. This feeling of apprehension was so strong at first that rifles and machine-guns were often not put to that use for which they would have been most effective.

In the end of ends, infantry is the deciding factor in every battle. I was in the infantry myself and was body and soul an infantryman. I told my sons to join the infantry. They did so, but, as happened to so many of our young men, the freedom of the air drew them from the trenches. But the fine saying of the old "Directions for Infantry Exercise" will always remain true in war: "The infantry bears the heaviest burden of a battle and requires the greatest sacrifice; so also it promises the greatest renown."

Heavy indeed is the burden of the infantry in this as in other wars. They have to endure the heaviest bombardments of the enemy, lying quietly in dirt and mud, in damp and cold, hungry and thirsty, or huddled in dug-outs, holes, and cellars, they must await the overpowering assault, until, leaving the safety of their shelters, face to face with death, they must rise to meet the destroying storm. Such is their life. It can be endured only when discipline has prepared the way, and when a deep love of the Fatherland and an imperative sense of duty fill the heart. The glory is great. But the highest reward lies in the proud consciousness of having served the Fatherland more than all others, and in the sense that one's own courage has wrung victory out of the battle. Those who have stayed at home

cannot picture it to themselves too often. Before such heroism they must bow the head in silence—and not talk.

In appraising achievements, equal justice must be done to all those who fought like the Infantry; the Pioneers, the dismounted cavalrymen, the field-telegraphists have equal glory. To all of them the same fine sentence in the Training Regulations applies.

In speaking thus, I do not wish to belittle what the other arms of the service accomplished. They all had the same appreciation and care from G.H.Q. The airman, too, shares the feeling of victory, the deep satisfaction of knowing that even in the air a man has his worth. But he is not subject to the disintegrating influences of battle.

The Artillery had to endure the same strain as the Infantry. The longer the war lasted, the higher their losses became, in defence as in attack. It became increasingly clear that they were the keystone of the battle and the mainstay of the front.

All the same, the Artillery need not fight with the Infantryman over that sentence in the Regulations. He would certainly be right if he contested the suggestion that the infantry is the Queen of Arms. It was by some error, that this statement had found its way into an Artillery Training Manual. There is no Queen of Arms. They all have equal right to the title, for all are equally necessary. It is impossible to get on without one of them.

I attached great significance to what I learned about our infantry at Cambrai, about their tactics and preparation. Without doubt they fought too doggedly, clinging too resolutely to the mere holding of ground, with the result that the losses were heavy. The deep dug-outs and cellars often became fatal man-traps. The use of the rifle was being forgotten, hand grenades had become the chief weapon, and the equipment of the infantry with machine-guns and similar weapons had fallen far behind that of the enemy. The Field-Marshal and I could for the moment only ask that the front lines should be held more lightly, the deep underground works be destroyed, and all trenches and posts be given up if the retention of them were unnecessary to the maintenance of the position as a whole,

and likely to be the cause of heavy losses. The problems of the reorganization and equipment of the infantry could be dealt with only step by step. The excessive use of hand grenades had come about because these could be usefully and safely employed from behind shelter, whereas a man using a rifle must leave his cover. In the close fighting of some of our own raids, and also in the large-scale attacks by the enemy, where the fighting at any moment came to be man to man, hand grenades were readier weapons for unpractised men and easier to use than rifles, the latter also having the disadvantage of getting dirty easily. One could understand that; but infantry must keep able to hold the enemy off and to fight from a distance. When it came to hand-to-hand fighting, the superiority of the enemy in men was much too great.

The infantry soldier had forgotten his shooting through use of grenades. He had to relearn it. He had to reacquire confidence in his weapon, and that meant that he must become master of it. That was easier to advise than to get accomplished. In the short training given to our new drafts little could be accomplished even if the attempt were made. Complete training was possible only under the conditions of peace, if the use of the rifle were to be a real protection when war came.

In the case of the hostile infantry, the strength of the men had been greatly increased by their war-machine; we, on the other hand, had still to rely chiefly on our men. We had every reason to be sparing of them. An important change, moreover, had occurred; the machine-gun had to become chief firing weapon of the infantry. The companies must be provided with new light machine-guns, the serving of which must be done by the smallest possible number of men. Our existing machine-guns in the machine-gun sections were too heavy for the purpose.

In order to strengthen our fire, at least in the most important parts of the chief theatre of war, it was necessary to create special machine-gun companies—so to speak, machine-gun sharpshooters. Already a beginning had been made; it was necessary to consolidate and to increase it.

The fighting power of the infantry had to be further streng-

thened by trench-mortars and bomb-throwers. The supply of all quick-loading weapons had to be increased.

Lastly, the formation of storm troops from the infantry, which had begun during the war, had not only to be regularized, but to be adapted to the common good. The Instruction Formations and the storm battalions had proved their high value both intrinsically and for the improvement of the infantry generally. They were examples to be imitated by the other men. But for this it was necessary to have a training manual prepared and this had not yet been done.

The course of the Somme battle had also supplied important lessons with respect to the construction and plan of our lines. The very deep underground forts in the front trenches had to be replaced by shallower constructions. Concrete " pill-boxes," which, however, unfortunately took long to build, had acquired an increasing value. The conspicuous lines of trenches, which appeared as sharp lines on every aerial photograph, supplied far too good a target for the enemy artillery. The whole system of defence had to be made broader and looser and better adapted to the ground. The large, thick barriers of wire, pleasant as they were when there was little doing, were no longer a protection. They withered under the enemy barrage. Light strands of wire, difficult to see, were much more useful. Forward infantry positions with a wide field of fire were easily seen by the enemy. They could be destroyed by the artillery of the enemy, and were very difficult to protect by our own artillery. Positions further back with a narrower field of fire and more under the protection of our own guns were retained. They were of special service in big actions.

The decisive value of artillery observation and the consequent necessity of paying great attention to the selection of positions had also become apparent.

Here also there was much to be done ; so much had changed, so much become completely transformed.

At the conference in Cambrai these various matters were merely touched on. I got no more than general impressions, but these were enough to show the necessity of altering the plan

of fighting, and of improving the Army in tactics and in equipment. On the Eastern front we had for the most part adhered to the old tactical methods and the old training which we had learned in the days of peace. Here we met with new conditions, and it was my duty to adapt myself to them.

I have always been interested in questions of tactics and armament, apart from the fact that these subjects formed part of my work in the Great General Staff at Berlin. Even at that time I had advocated many changes which had now become of the utmost importance. As could clearly have been foreseen, these subjects had now become questions of life or death to the Army on the battlefields, and they could not receive too much attention. My responsibility to the Army in this matter weighed particularly heavily on me. If, on the one hand, I had perforce to demand the sacrifice of human lives, on the other hand, I had the nobler task, from the point of view of humanity, of doing all I could to save German lives.

All this determined me to look more closely into the question of body armour. We did indeed give some out to the troops, but it was never popular, as the men found it too heavy.

Our conference at Cambrai had proved profitable. The quiet dignity of the assembled Army Commanders and Chiefs of Staff who had now for close on two years been engaged in great defensive battles in the West, whilst the Field-Marshal and I had been winning battles in bold offensives in the East, made a deep impression on me. I was strengthened in my determination to make the Government put into the war what war requires. Men, war material and moral resolution were matters of life and death to the Army. The longer the war lasted, the more urgent they became. The more the Army demanded, the more the country would have to find, and the greater would be the task before the Imperial Government, and especially the Prussian War Ministry.

After the conference, we dined with the Crown Prince of Bavaria. It was only his sense of duty that made him a soldier; his inclinations were not military. Nevertheless, he entered upon his high military position and applied himself to the work it

entailed with great devotion, and, supported by his excellent Chiefs of Staff, the Bavarian General Krafft von Dellmensingen at the beginning of the war, and now General von Kuhl—met all the great demands made on a Group Commander. He, like the German Crown Prince, was in favour of ending the war without victory either side, but he had no idea whether the Entente would agree to this. My relations with the Crown Prince of Bavaria were always good.

Duke Albrecht of Würtemberg, the Commander of the 4th Army, who was also present, was of a more pronounced soldierly temperament than the two Crown Princes. I seldom had the pleasure of meeting him, and have particularly pleasant recollections of the stimulating conversation I had with him. He was a real personality.

In the afternoon we left Cambrai on our return journey through Belgium. The Governor-General, von Bissing, accompanied us part of the way. We arranged with him that the Army of Occupation in Belgium was to be reduced, as if units were to hold longer fronts in various parts of the West Front in the near future, it was advisable that Landsturm formations should be put into line here and there. We also asked for his help in the execution of our plans for the supply of war material.

On my way next afternoon I discussed this matter with Herr Duisburg and Herr Krupp von Bohlen u. Halbach, whom I had asked to join the train. They considered it quite possible, in view of our stocks of raw material, to increase our output of war material if only the labour problem could be solved.

Early on the 9th, we were back again in Pless. I was now at home in my position and understood my sphere of work. It was an enormous field of labour that suddenly opened before me, and many things were expected of me with which I had hitherto had nothing to do. Not only had I to probe deeply into the inner workings of the war-direction, and get a grasp of both great and small matters that affected the home-life of the people, but I had to familiarize myself with great world-questions which raised all sorts of problems.

Our old offices—in one of the Knight's Houses of the Prince's

castle—were now too small for us. Fresh ones were taken in the administrative buildings of the principality of Pless. We ourselves occupied the house of Herr Nasse, the estate agent of the Prince of Pless. Regular work now began.

VIII

As was to be expected, the Entente's offensive was continued throughout September and October, and even later, with unremitting vigour. September was an especially critical month. It was not made easy for us to embark on an operation in Transylvania against Rumania.

The battle of the Somme, which had started on July 1st with an attempt at a break-through on a large scale, had been continued throughout July with the same intention and in the same strength. With the immediate object of wearing down our resistance the Entente had continued to launch big attacks in great strength on all parts of the battle front. After Rumania's declaration of war, these attacks were renewed with fresh vigour, and the Entente returned to their plan of a regular break-through. The battles that were then fought are among the most fiercely contested of the whole war, and far exceeded all previous offensives as regards the number of men and the amount of material employed. North of the Somme, the attack was resumed as early as the 3rd September and lasted until the 7th. The enemy penetrated into our positions more and more deeply. On September 5th, south of the Somme, the French also attacked on a wide front, and gained ground at several points.

On the northern bank, fighting began again on the 9th, and lasted until the 17th. We were thrown back still further. Ginchy and Bouchavesnes fell into the enemy's hands. The 17th was a day of heavy fighting on the southern bank ; we lost Berny and Deniécourt. South of the Somme, the fighting was somewhat less fierce, though the hostile artillery fire was kept up. North of the Somme fighting ceased ; but the 25th saw the beginning of the heaviest of the many heavy engagements that

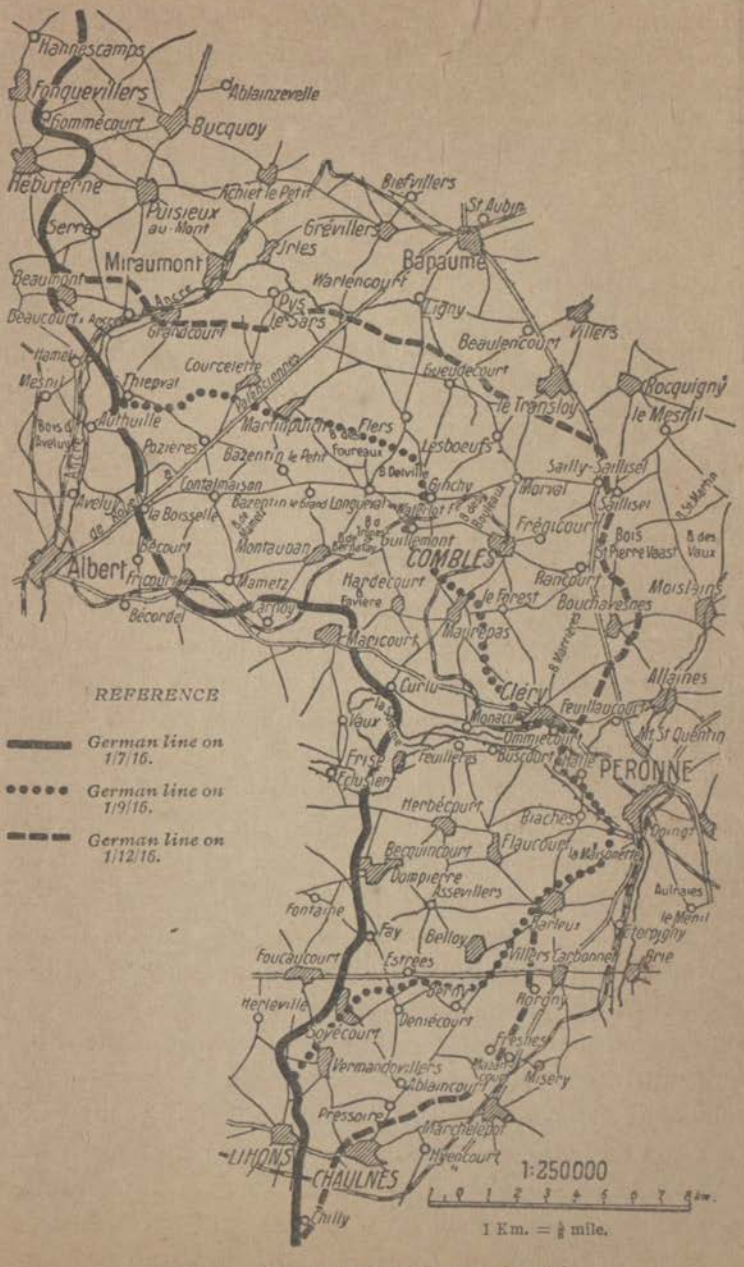


Fig. 10. The Battle of the Somme, 1916.

made up the Battle of the Somme. Great were our losses. The enemy took Rancourt, Morval, Geudecourt and the hotly contested Combles. On the 26th, the Thiépval salient fell. Further enemy attacks on the 28th miscarried.

The fighting had made the most extraordinary demands both on commanders and troops. The relief arrangements inaugurated at Cambrai, and the new system of reserves projected for the West Front, no longer sufficed. Divisions and other formations had to be thrown in on the Somme front in quicker succession and had to stay in the line longer. The time for recuperation and training on quiet sectors became shorter and shorter. The troops were getting exhausted. Everything was cut as fine as possible! The strain on our nerves in Pless was terrible; over and over again we had to find and adopt new expedients. It needed the iron nerves of Generals von Gallwitz, Fritz von Below, von Kuhl, Colonels von Lossberg and Bronsart von Schellendorf, to keep them from losing their heads, to systematically put in the reserves as they came up, and, despite all our failures, eventually to succeed in saving the situation. Above all, it needed troops like the Germans!

In October the attacks continued in undiminished force, especially on the northern part of the front. The enemy brought up even more men and material. We sustained losses, yet an effective stiffening of our defence began to be perceptible.

The struggle continued in the shell-hole area on the north-eastern front of Verdun. The French were pushing forward and we remained on the defensive. The troops were very exhausted. But there was no change in the general situation there.

On the Italian Front, between the 14th and 17th September, the seventh Isonzo offensive of the Italian armies, and the eighth, from the 9th to the 13th October, had been beaten off by Austria-Hungary. A further attack was to be expected.

On the Macedonian front, the Entente had embarked on a counter-offensive during the latter half of September, west of Lake Ostrovo in the direction of Florina, and had pushed the Bulgarians back to the positions they had held in August.

had hoped that they would find prepared positions there, but I soon learnt quite another story from the Staff of the 11th Army which had taken over command there. The Bulgarians had done nothing. The position was, of course, serious, and Colonel Gantscheff complained bitterly of the bad impression the fall of Monastir would make on his Bulgarians. But he did not care to think of the far worse impression his Bulgarians made on us. At the moment we could do nothing for them. But I had come round to the view that we should have to get a firmer control of the Bulgarian Army, and to this end I proposed the formation of a special Army Group under German command, but to be subject to the Bulgarian High Command. This suggestion met with approval. General Otto von Below, with his Chief of Staff, General von Böckmann, left Courland and took over the command of the new army group in Uskub.

During the first half of October the position of the Bulgarian troops on the Macedonian plain was grave.

On the Eastern front, G.H.Q. attempted first of all to convey German troops to the Maros sector, in order to give the weak Austro-Hungarian defence a certain stiffening. That was our first task. Next, a clear understanding had to be arrived at regarding the direction of operations against Rumania, and new arrangements had to be made north of the Carpathians. As General von Conrad insisted on Austro-Hungarian command in Transylvania, a new army group was formed in Hungary, under the Archduke Charles. He retained General von Seeckt as his Chief of Staff.

The Archduke's former army group, with the exception of the troops in the Carpathians, was placed under General von Boehm-Ermolli who retained his command of the 2nd Austrian Army. The group so formed was placed under the command of the Commander-in-Chief in the East. North of the Carpathians we had got at last what we had been struggling for so long, a definite organization of command which would meet the requirements of the situation. This had now become urgently necessary. The very exhausted German divisions of General Count von Bothmer's army, which the Russians had been attacking vio-

lently for so long, needed to be relieved by those divisions from the old front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East on which less heavy demands had been made. The work of carrying out the relief meant a very tedious business, as it could only be done train for train. Our forces everywhere were so weak that, in view of the critical situation, whole divisions could not be taken at once from any one place. This was impossible in any case, as the Commander-in-Chief in the East had continually to release more and more troops for Rumania.

Archduke Charles' new army group comprised the troops in the Carpathians, which were formed into the Austrian 7th Army, and the two armies to be formed in Transylvania. The northern one, the 1st Austrian Army, under General von Arz, was to be deployed on both sides of Maros Vasarhely as far back as Klausenburg, and the southern, the German 9th Army, under General von Falkenhayn, between Karlsburg and Mühlbach, with small detachments further south as far as Orsova. In this most important sector General von Falkenhayn had an opportunity of giving practical proof of his military ability as a leader of troops in the service of his country.

At the end of August and the beginning of September, in East Galicia and the Carpathians the Russians were putting heavy pressure on what was then the Army Group of the Archduke Charles. The result was the gradual withdrawal of General Count von Bothmer's army from the Zlota Lipa behind the Narajovka, and a further loss of ground by the Austrian troops in the Carpathians, particularly near the Tartar pass and on the frontier of the Bukowina. As the security of this front was a vital necessity for any operation against the Rumanian army in Transylvania, there was nothing for it but to send at least three divisions, which were on their way from the hard-pressed Western front, to Transylvania, Boehm-Ermolli and the Archduke Charles' Army Groups on the Dniester and in the Carpathians. I agreed to this with a heavy heart. I remember the bitter feelings which surged up within me against the Austrian army at the thought of our difficult position in the West and the East, and the tasks our troops were called upon to perform on

all fronts. But there was no help for it. Our interests were mutual in the matter.

After further wavering, our front against the Russians was stabilized by the middle of September. In spite of a prodigious expenditure of men, further violent attacks, west of Lutsk, on the Saturczy–Pustomity line, the Graberka sector west of Brody and the heights of Zborov, as well as Brszeszany and our positions on the Narajovka, were all without result. Nor were the Russians able to boast of any notable gains in the fighting in the Carpathians for the Tartar pass and the crest south-east to Kirlibaba, thanks to the admirable bearing of the German troops. Still, the position about the middle of October was by no means secure, nor was the Russian power of offence in any way broken. Their massed attacks continued with the same courage, and where this failed, the troops were urged on from behind by machine guns. The determination to obtain a victory in Volhynia, East Galicia and in the Carpathians, was still the driving force at the Russian Headquarters.

The deployment on the Maros was not complete until the end of September. A rapid advance on the part of the Rumanians would have utterly upset it. The Rumanian army moved forward at a snail's pace, partly because their attention had been diverted by Field-Marshal von Mackensen's great successes in his invasion of the Dobrudja, and also because they were waiting for the Russians to cross the Carpathians. Their left wing remained between Orsova and Hermannstadt, where there was a rather stronger concentration. The bulk of their army was debouching from Kronstadt and the frontier mountains of Moldavia on an east and west line, in close touch with the Russian left wing.

It appears to have been the intention of the Russians and Rumanians to descend into the Hungarian plain on a continuous line between the Carpathians and the Danube. But if this were to be accomplished very strong Russian forces would have to be brought through the Carpathians. The Rumanians were to open the Carpathian passes for the Russians from the rear, by a vigorous irruption into our concentration area. They did the

opposite. Unaccustomed to war on a large scale, they made no use of the chances offered them again and again of forcing our divisions up against the Dniester and the Carpathians. They advanced extraordinarily slowly and lost time. Every day was a day gained to us ! The Russians, too, showed no capacity. They preferred to storm the ridge of the Carpathians instead of making a thrust at our open flank through Moldavia. Rumania's participation in the whole campaign followed no definite plan. No common scheme of operations had been settled.

After the first German troops from the West, which had been intended for Rumania, had been moved to East Galicia and the Carpathians, we had to transfer to Transylvania divisions from the front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East. We had to take the risk of weakening the front there. But the appearance of these troops in Transylvania could not be counted on before the middle of September. The poor railway communications in Hungary caused still further delay.

The Austrian troops, too, were long in coming up. General von Conrad did not dare to weaken the Isonzo front any further, He only let us have some mountain brigades from the Tyrol. Even these, too, could not be on the spot until very late. I therefore offered the Austrian G.H.Q. in Teschen several Austrian divisions of Linsingen's Group which could no longer be employed against Russian troops. They were thankfully received. These divisions could hold part of the line, but certainly could hardly be used for attack.

In the second half of September the forces which we were concentrating in Transylvania gradually increased in numbers, though they were still very weak in comparison with the enemy. At the best, it was all a question of a few divisions. The Austrian 1st Army had little fighting value. The 9th Army was capable of an offensive, and it was the centre of gravity of the whole operation.

As soon as their concentration was completed, about the end of September, both armies were to start off, the Austrian 1st Army passing north of Schässburg, in a direction due east, and

the bulk of the 9th Army making for a line from Hermannstadt to Kronstadt. The Rumanians were to be attacked and thrust back towards the East. In executing this movement, the 9th Army was to keep its right wing close to the north side of the Transylvanian Alps, so as to cut off the Rumanian Army in Transylvania from its communications with Wallachia. The operation automatically secured the right flank of the Army.

The three divisions of the 9th Army concentrating around Mühlbach could be enveloped from the region of Petroseny through the Vulkan and Szurduk passes, if the Rumanians decided to force their way past Hermannstadt and northwards over the Maros. This possibility was to be dealt with first. It was important that we should throw back the Rumanians near Petroseny over the mountain ridge. The first German troops that came up were successful in doing so on the 19th of September. When these had been brought back to join in the forward movement from Mühlbach to Hermannstadt, Austrian troops took over the defence of the passes. The Rumanians succeeded in recovering them on the 25th, but by then they had lost some of their importance.

In front of the 1st Army the Rumanians had pushed their way into the Görgeny mountains in the bend of the upper Maros, and had driven in the Austrian posts on that river above Maros-Vasarhely. Further south they had reached the neighbourhood of Szekely-Udvarhely and east of Fogaras. The Hermannstadt Group, two or three divisions strong, had not moved. Weak Austrian troops, stiffened by the Transylvanian Cavalry Brigade which had been formed out of three cavalry regiments specially for this purpose, were holding a thin line between Schässburg and Hermannstadt.

The operations were to begin with a shattering blow at the Hermannstadt group by General von Falkenhayn. The exit from the Rotenturm pass was to be closed, and both armies were to strike eastwards.

The Hermannstadt blow succeeded. By the 26th of September the Alpine Corps, in a long flanking march, had pushed forward to the Rotenturm pass in the rear of the enemy, where-

upon the main body of the 9th Army attacked on both sides of Hermannstadt. Our force was weak and the battle lasted until the 30th. The Rumanians offered an obstinate resistance and also attacked the Alpine Corps from the south. However, the Rumanian main forces moved too late, and could not prevent the complete overthrow of a part of their army at Hermannstadt.

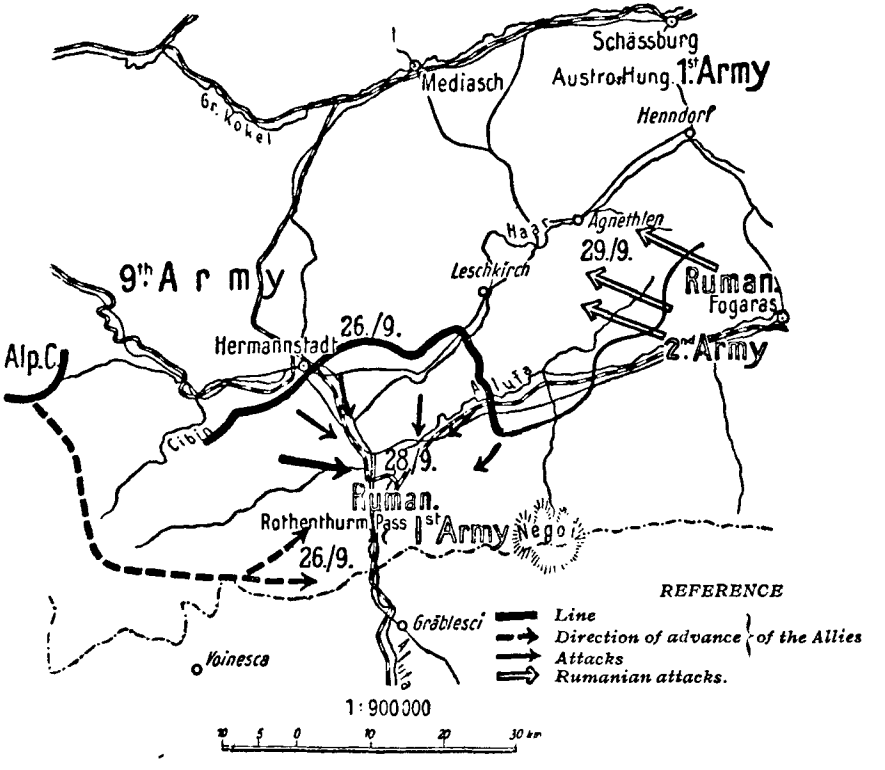


Fig. 11. Hermannstadt, 1916.

The Alpine Corps, reinforced by Austrian mountain formations which were now arriving, took over the duty of covering the right flank of the army at the Rotenturm pass. General von Falkenhayn himself immediately started his army on its eastward march, keeping to the north of the mountain ridge. To add to the pressure here, the 89th German Division of the 1st Army was pushed forward past and to the west of Schässburg, to join

the 9th Army. General von Arz started off simultaneously. The opposing armies were thus converging on one another.

At the outset the Rumanians were able to record a success in the centre. They were, however, beaten by the 9th Army

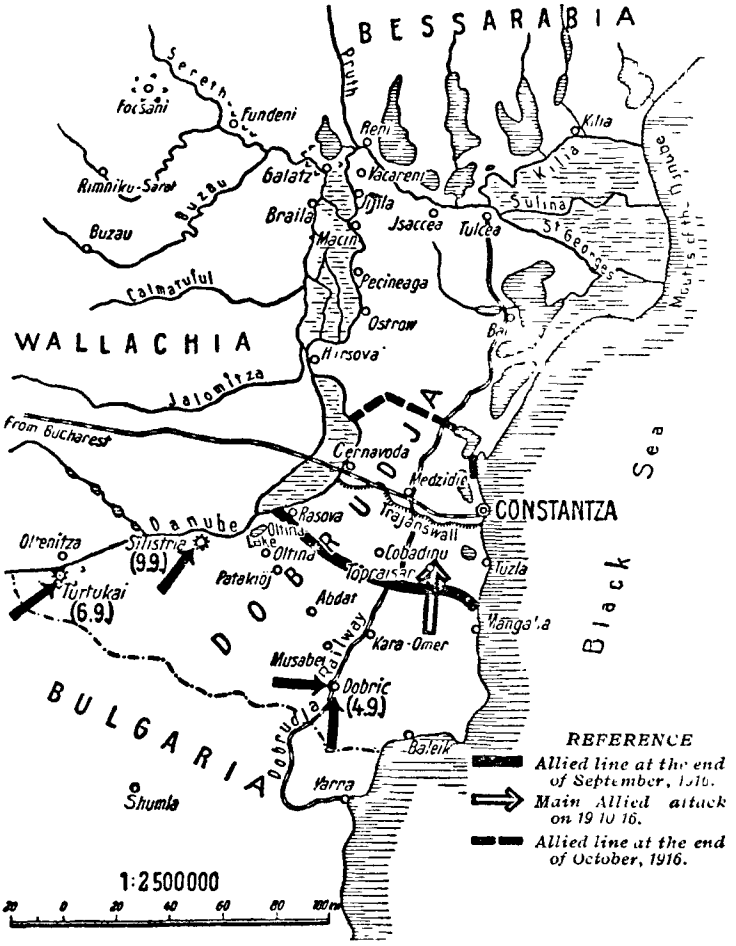


Fig. 12. The Battles in the Dobrudja. Autumn, 1916.

south of Fogaras, and in a brilliant pursuit, lasting to the 10th of October, were thrown back through the Geister-Forest and Kronstadt to Campulung, Sinaia and Buzau in the mountains south of Kronstadt. The pressure which the 9th Army thus brought to bear was so strong that the Rumanians further north

also began to retreat, and the Austrian 1st Army was enabled gradually to ascend from the region in which the Aluta and Maros rise, to the frontier mountains of Moldavia.

Meanwhile the attack of Field-Marshal von Mackensen against the Rumanians had resulted in a brilliant success. Whilst a weak force marched along the Dobrudja railway on Dobric, the Field-Marshal, with the rest of his army, attacked the fortress of Turtukai in the early days of September. Thanks to the decisive help of Bode's weak German detachment, the result was amazing. After a slight resistance, the best part of two Rumanian divisions surrendered on the 6th of September. Silistria was rushed on the 9th. Dobric had already been taken on the 4th. It was not possible to press forward beyond this place, as the Rumanian troops here were very quickly reinforced by a Russian division and a division composed of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war.

There was a certain apprehension in Sofia as to how the Bulgarian troops would behave against the Russians, but this proved unfounded. The Bulgarians made no distinction between the Russians and the Rumanians. Unfortunately their capacity for attack or manœuvre was not great. The 3rd Bulgarian Army gave the German Command much trouble at times.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen kept his left wing close to the Danube, and exerted his chief pressure at this point. The enemy forces which were assembling on the Kara Omer—ten kilometres north-east of Dobric—Lake Oltina line were to be pinned against the Black Sea. Bode's German detachment, which was on the left wing, broke through this position in one great rush, and pressed onwards down the Danube. The Bulgarians, however, were not quick enough. They attacked, it is true, but the enemy withdrew on the 15th of September in an orderly manner. The 3rd Bulgarian Army had let slip the chance of a great success. The enemy managed to take up the new line Rasova–Cobadinu–Tuzla, which had been fortified before the war began.

Attempts to take this position as well had soon to be abandoned. The strength of the Bulgarian-Turkish troops at hand at the time was insufficient. Communications had to be restored

and extended, so that the necessary ammunition could be brought up for the attack. All this took time.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen begged, as early as the latter half of September, for a German division; he could not carry out the attack without it. But the decision whether or not this request could be granted had to stand over for the time being.

While preparations for the resumption of the attack were in full swing, we were suddenly surprised on the 1st of October by news from Sofia that the Rumanians had crossed the Danube near Rahovo, north-east of Rustchuk, in strength. The forces watching the Danube were weak; there were no other troops handy. Field-Marshal von Mackensen threw against them everything he could scrape together and by the 3rd of October the Rumanians were compelled to retire again to the north bank of the Danube. The Austrian Danube flotilla had co-operated effectively. What the Rumanian High Command really intended to achieve by this enterprise has never been made clear; it could certainly not affect the course of events in Transylvania and the Dobrudja.

By the middle of October the general situation had improved. On the Western Front it remained grave in the highest degree, but the crisis had been overcome by the strenuous efforts of the troops there.

On the Italian Front two strong enemy attacks had been beaten off.

In Macedonia a reverse was still to be feared.

The Rumanian Army in the Dobrudja and Transylvania had received a sharp set-back; there was no change on the rest of the Eastern Front.

The plan of the Entente to overwhelm us once and for all in the autumn of 1916, a plan which in August and September still seemed possible of realization, was foiled for the time being. But the fighting on all the fronts was not yet over. At that time we did not know, as we do now in the light of subsequent events, whether the enemy's endurance or our own would give out first. Rumania was not yet beaten. As I now saw quite clearly, we should not have been able to exist, much less carry on the war,

without Rumania's corn and oil, even though we had saved the Galician oil-fields at Drohobycz from the Russians.

Since the Field-Marshal and I assumed the supreme command, we had made one great step forward, but a second was still to be taken. It meant the continued holding of the fronts, and, if we were to survive, a victory over Rumania. The year 1917 opened with this goal still before us. The great Entente offensive of 1916, with its attendant perils, had been successfully dealt with. We could dismiss it from our minds, but we found ourselves faced with a future fraught with new anxieties.

IX

The second step to which we had to make up our minds in the middle of October was extremely serious.

It was difficult to strike at the Rumanians through the frontier mountains or across the Danube; still more difficult to provide new troops for the continuation of the operations.

Of course, we had given prolonged consideration to the question of how to continue the operations against Rumania. The most profitable operation would be the simultaneous advance of both Army Groups, with their inner wings on Galatz; or rather, if Mackensen's Army could push up to the mouth of the Danube below Galatz, while the Archduke Charles' Army Group pressed forward to the Sereth above Galatz, taking care to secure their inner flanks. The result of this would be the annihilation of the bulk of the Rumanian Army in Wallachia and the occupation of an area rich in just those warlike resources which we lacked. This splendid idea had occurred to the minds of the commanders on the spot, as well as my own.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen received the division he had asked for—the 217th—in time to enable him to attack the enemy's Tuzla–Cobadinu–Rasova line, and continue his advance to the Danube.

In view of the resistance, varied with violent attacks, which the Archduke Charles' Army Group met with in the frontier

mountains from Orsova to the Bukovina, it was soon apparent that the 9th and the Austrian 1st Armies had come to a standstill. A continuation of the attack here was no longer possible.

Other plans had to be adopted for the entire operations. Field-Marshal von Mackensen had to beat the enemy in the Dobrudja with the help of the German division which was coming up, though slowly, follow him up with part of his forces, and with the rest effect a crossing of the Danube south of Bucharest. The 9th Army of Archduke Charles' Army Group was to cross the Transylvanian Alps into Wallachia. Both armies were then to defeat the enemy and try to effect their junction.

It was not yet certain whether Field-Marshal von Mackensen would cross the Danube near Turtukai, Rustchuk or Sistova, and whether General von Falkenhayn, with his main concentration near Orsova, would invade Wallachia by way of the Szurdok or Rotenturm passes. In any case, the troops which had opposed the Rumanians up to now no longer sufficed. The Rumanian Army was strong; help was to be expected from Russia. Of course, both Army Groups would have every available man ready for the invasion of Wallachia.

I would willingly have reinforced Field-Marshal Mackensen with anything that could be spared, so as to make his front the centre of gravity of the whole operations. It was easier to cross the Danube than the mountains, where, moreover, snow had already fallen. Besides, the enemy's whole attention was concentrated on the mountain sector. But the condition of the Bulgarian railways precluded any reinforcement of Field-Marshal von Mackensen. We had therefore to decide to force the mountain barrier as the first part of the operation; only when this was done and we were well into Wallachia could the Field-Marshal cross the Danube; otherwise, with his small force his position would have been dangerous.

The broad outlines of our plan were adhered to, but the knotty question had still to be decided whether the necessary troops for this operation were really available. I had a severe inward struggle. The wastage on both the long East and West

Fronts had become very great, and the fighting was not yet over. I shut my eyes to all dangers on other fronts; the Commander-in-Chief in the East had once again to give up two or three infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions. Besides this, the 7th Cavalry Division was withdrawn from the General Government of Belgium. With this reinforcement the operation could at least be ventured on, and in the middle of November initiated; whether it could prove successful was, in view of our great weakness, doubtful.

Whilst the new campaign against Rumania was in full swing at the end of October and the beginning of November, and events in that quarter took their course, the battles on the other fronts continued.

The Battle of the Somme continued throughout October with great bitterness. On the north bank of the river the 13th, 18th and 23rd of October were days of pitched battles of the fiercest description; an unusually severe strain was put on the troops, but on the whole they stood their ground; our resistance had stiffened. A violent onslaught on the 5th of November, between Bouchavesnes and Le Sars was also beaten off. But in the bitter fighting that followed the French were once more successful. On the 13th of November the English, too, penetrated our positions on both sides of the Ancre—a particularly heavy blow, for we considered such an event no longer possible, particularly in sectors where our troops still held good positions. On the 14th of November the English were again successful at this point. The 18th was another day of heavy fighting, but, in spite of the enemy's great expenditure of men, ended on the whole favourably for us.

There had also been fighting on the south bank of the Somme. From the 10th of October onwards the attacks south of the Roman road became still heavier, and later fierce fighting also developed to the north. Here, on the 29th of October, we were successful in our attack on La Maisonette Farm. This caused general satisfaction, although in itself not of much importance; still, it meant a successful attack for once on the Western Front. It is easy to understand the feeling of troops who take part in an

offensive action, after being subjected to enemy drum-fire for days on end, and manage to make a success of it on a battle-field which had hitherto witnessed defence only and many a disaster to German arms.

As fighting on the French sector of the Somme battle-field died down, the position before Verdun again became critical. The French attacked on the 24th; we lost Fort Douaumont, and on the 1st of November were obliged to evacuate Fort Vaux also. The loss was grievous, but still more grievous was the

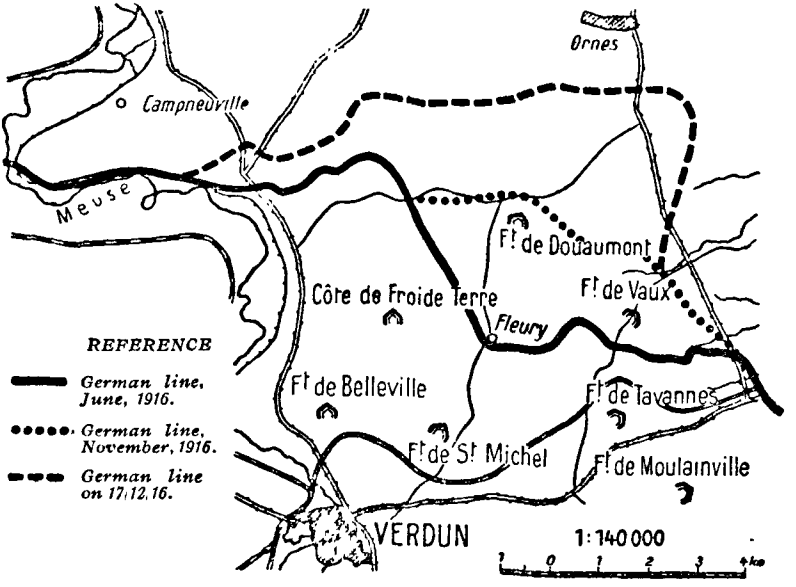


Fig. 13. The Battles at Verdun. Autumn, 1916.

totally unexpected decimation of some of our divisions. The tension on the West Front was particularly trying at a time when the second deployment against Rumania was not yet complete. Nevertheless, uncertain though the situation was, G.H.Q. endured this new trial to carry through what had been recognized as the only sound plan, the defeat of the Rumanian Army and the occupation of Wallachia.

From the middle of November onwards we awaited, with great anxiety, the further violent enemy attacks on the Somme and at Verdun which our invasion of Rumania was likely to

provoke. But the lull in the fighting which became noticeable on the south bank of the Somme from the beginning of November, and on the north bank towards the end of the month, continued. For the time being the Entente had no longer the strength, nor probably the ammunition, to develop further attacks.

On the 14th, 15th and 16th of December, however, there was again very hard fighting round Verdun. France attacked so as to limit still further, before the end of the year, the German gains of 1916 before this fortress. They achieved their object. The blow they dealt us was particularly heavy. We not only suffered heavy casualties, but also lost important positions. The strain

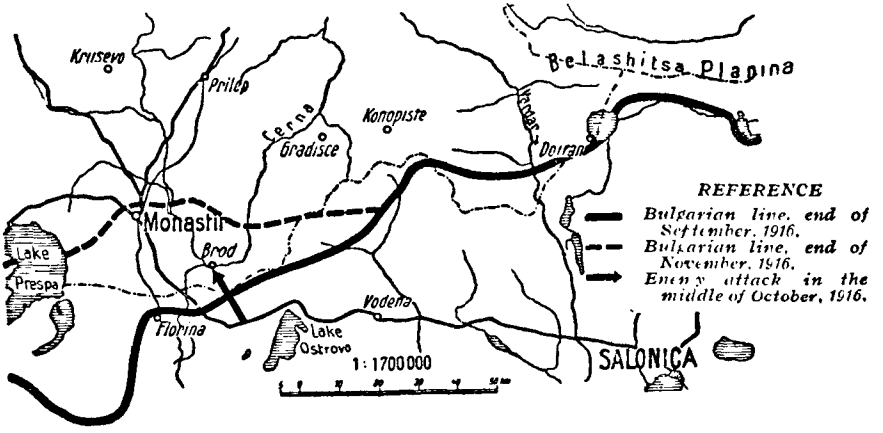


Fig. 14. The Battles in Macedonia. Autumn, 1916.

during this year had proved too great. The endurance of the troops had been weakened by long spells of defence under the powerful enemy artillery fire and their own losses. We were completely exhausted on the Western Front.

On the Italian Front fighting was renewed at the beginning of November. On the 7th the ninth Italian Isonzo offensive had to all intents and purposes been repulsed. For the time being there was a lull in the fighting there. Italy also was not strong enough to relieve the pressure on her ally Rumania. The Austro-Hungarian troops on that front were themselves so exhausted that new forces could not be spared for use against Rumania.

The situation on the Macedonian Front, too, was not to develop in our favour. Rear communications with the Macedonian plain and the mountains on both sides of the river Cerna were still far from complete; there was too much leeway to be made up. The German Army Command had but little prospect of establishing the Bulgarian Army firmly in the position from which they started. At an early stage it began the construction of a rear position north of Monastir, across the plain and over the wild and rugged mountains on both sides of the Cerna.

In the middle of October the Entente succeeded in crossing the river near Brod in capturing key positions in the mountains. This caused the staff of the 11th Army to move their line further back towards Monastir. When, about the middle of November, the Entente renewed their attacks, the Bulgarian Army gave ground again and again, and had to withdraw fighting to the position north of Monastir.

On the 18th the town was occupied by the Serbs. The Bulgarian Army had been considerably shaken, and we were obliged to make up our minds to bring up to the Macedonian mountains the three or four Jäger battalions which were really intended for Orsova. There could now no longer be any question of taking further Bulgarian troops from this front for the campaign against Rumania. As an immediate effect of our invasion of Wallachia at the end of November and beginning of December, the Entente began heavy relief attacks on our new positions, which we held, however, in fierce fighting. By throwing in our last ounce of strength we victoriously beat off further attacks in the second half of December. Communications improved and supply got better. The position on the Macedonian front again became more stable; unfortunately not without our employing some, even though only a few, German battalions, whose absence from Rumania was of course sorely felt.

By the occupation of the Piræus and Athens in October, the Entente had in the meantime gained control of Greece and her railways. They promoted the formation on a larger scale of contingents of Venizelist troops. Wherever the Entente went

they increased their resources for carrying on the war, and this object was the deciding factor in determining their attitude towards Greece.

The Royalist troops were withdrawn from Thessaly in November. Between Florina and Valona a continuous line was gradually being established.

On the front of the Commander-in-Chief in the East the Russians made one more powerful but abortive attack, west of Lutsk, on the Pustomity-Saturtzy front, about the middle of October. Then their attacks here gradually died down. Along the Narajovka they continued into November. Russia was at last exhausted. We were still strong enough to make some local attacks that required little preparation, the most important of which took place on the front of Woyrsch's Army Group on November 9th. It was quite on Western lines and was completely successful. We, too, had now come to the end of our strength.

In connection with the battles in Rumania the Russians continued their attacks in the Carpathians from October well into December.

At the same time an extension of the Russian Front to the south was perceptible. Russians and Rumanians attacked on the eastern frontier of Transylvania and Rumania. Our advance in Wallachia provoked even fiercer battles, and brought upon us strong Russian massed attacks, which again produced local crises, and tried our nerves highly. The Austrian 1st Army, in the Transylvanian frontier mountains, was particularly heavily attacked, until Bavarian troops restored the position here too.

X

At the end of October and the beginning of November, whilst the fighting on all fronts was still at its zenith and the end was not yet in sight, our second concentration against Rumania was in full swing. It was no simple task. It took a long time, during which we had ample opportunity to reflect over the

wisdom of our decision. It would be justified by success. But if it had failed what would then have been the verdict passed on the campaign against Rumania?

After endless supply difficulties had been surmounted, Field Marshal von Mackensen's preparations in the Dobrudja were complete by the middle of October. His Chief of Staff was General Tappen who had been Director of Operations at G.H.Q. until the beginning of September. He applied himself with zeal to his new and important work and displayed great foresight.

The attack began on the 19th October. By this time the 217th Infantry Division had also come up and been given the place of honour, Topraisar, which it was to storm. Once more German blood had to flow because our Allies were not equal to the demands made by this war. The enemy had been considerably reinforced, and, at the beginning of October, attempted to strike at the German–Bulgarian–Turkish Army in the Dobrudja. However, his attacks were not co-ordinated nor pressed with sufficient determination. He let slip the opportunity, of which he might have made good use. Field-Marshal von Mackensen's attack resulted, after three days of heavy fighting, in a brilliant break-through. The hostile army was thrown back in disorder northwards over the Constanza–Cernavoda railway. The pursuit was relentlessly taken up. By the 23rd Constanza, with its rich stores of oil, was in our possession, and soon afterwards Cernavoda also fell. The pursuit was not relaxed until we were twenty kilometres north of the railway.

Of course the question was raised whether the Army should not exploit its victory further and press on northwards right to the Danube. I vetoed this as the check to the Archduke Charles' attack in the Transylvanian mountains had, meanwhile, become an irrefutable fact. Even if the 3rd Bulgarian Army, with its inadequate communications, had pressed forward to the Danube, it would only have been isolated there. It could not have been brought in to co-operate with the 9th Army in its invasion of Western Wallachia. Yet that co-operation constituted a condition precedent to the success of the whole opera-

tion. Much though G.H.Q. regretted it, orders were issued for Field-Marshal von Mackensen to cease his advance, prepare to cross the Danube south of Bucharest, and effect the crossing in the greatest possible strength in the latter half of November. The Field-Marshal, on his own responsibility, left only a particularly weak force in the Northern Dobrudja. It entrenched a line here and of course its position continued to be very precarious. The bulk of Mackensen's Army was transferred to Rustchuk, partly by forced marches and partly by the very inadequate Dobrudja railway which was gradually getting into working order again. Field-Marshal von Mackensen chose Sistova–Simnitza for his crossing place. For us, in Pless, this westerly point was convenient, as the Danube Army was thus brought nearer to the parts of the 9th Army which were forcing their way into western Wallachia.

The region of Orsova, the Vulcan and Szurdok Passes, or the Rotenturm Pass, presented themselves as gateways into Wallachia from west and north.

Just south of the Rotenturm Pass General Krafft von Dellmensingen, with his Alpine Corps, reinforced by two Austrian mountain brigades, had, after the Battle of Hermannstadt, met with a very stubborn resistance in covering the flanks of the 9th Army which was pressing forward towards Kronstadt. In order to attract the enemy to his front, and so relieve the burden on this army, he had adopted offence as the best means of defence. In spite of violent fighting, in which the Rumanians often counter-attacked, the Alpine Corps was able to gain but little ground south of the pass by the end of October. It was a case of true mountain warfare in winter, in all its characteristic forms, with all its stupendous difficulties. The troops, including the Austrian mountain brigades, fought admirably, but it was a terribly slow business.

An attempt by the bulk of the 9th Army to force the crests at the highest and broadest part, in face of a strong enemy who could no longer be surprised, would also have been hung up, as had been the fate of a similar attack in October, south of Kronstadt. We did not like having to select the western end

for our attack, as in this way the strategical possibilities would be diminished; but this could not be helped. The first thing was to get over the mountains somehow. The 9th Army had made an attempt, at the end of October, to advance south of the Vulcan and Szurdok Passes. This had been foiled by a sudden change of weather and by the vigilance of the enemy. The troops had to be withdrawn as far as the heights overlooking the pass. We had got some idea of the ground and had come to the conclusion that the forcing of the mountains, at this particularly narrow spot, was quite practicable. I also relied on the assumption that the Rumanians would not expect here the repetition of an attack which had cost us so heavily; so G.H.Q. decided to choose this position in the mountains as our point of sortie. It seemed more favourable than the region of Orsova, where the passes were still to be won.

Profiting by our dearly-won experience, we made thorough preparations, even to the smallest detail, and the troops were supplied with complete mountain equipment. Particular attention was given to the improvement of the mountain roads and the accumulation of material, so that there might be no delay in pursuing the enemy. Motor trolleys, for use on the Rumanian railways, were also held in readiness. Our communications in Wallachia would be very difficult, in spite of all our foresight, so long as only the road through the Szurdok Pass was at our disposal.

On the 10th of November General Kühne had completed his preparations, and the opening of operations was fixed for the 11th. This group, with four infantry and two cavalry divisions, under the command of General Count von Schmettow, was to break out here, and push forward vigorously through Craiova to the river Aluta. This would mean that they would take the defences of Orsova on the east and the Rotenturm Pass in the rear. At Orsova a weak brigade, including German cyclist troops under the Austrian Colonel Szivo, was to attack simultaneously. General von Krafft, who was reinforced, and the troops south of Kronstadt were to continue their attacks.

The 11th of November brought complete success to General

Kühne; now at last we reaped the benefit of our raid at the end of October. General Kühne crossed the mountains, defeated the opposing Rumanian divisions in the Battle of Targu Jiu, on the 17th of November, and had occupied Craiova by the 21st. On the 23rd General Count von Schmettow, with his cavalry divisions, had reached the Aluta east of Caracal; the Aluta bridge at this point was in his possession. Further north our infantry had reached the Aluta opposite Slatina. Here, as further up stream, the bridges had been completely destroyed. On the same day, in a thick fog, Field-Marshal von Mackensen had gained a footing on the north bank of the Danube, near Simnitza. Here again the operation had been very well prepared. This is the day we had fixed on to get the armies working in co-operation by exploiting all the possibilities of the situation. Apparently we had been successful, but we were not yet at the end of our difficulties.

Meanwhile, General von Krafft had fought his way further through the mountains, but had not yet debouched into the plain at Rimnicu Valcea and north of Curtea de Arges.

In the rear of General Kühne's forces the Rumanians, fighting bravely, had withdrawn from Orsova down the Danube, and were still retreating, keeping close to the river. Though surrounded on all sides, they did not lay down their arms until they had reached the confluence of the Aluta at the beginning of December. Their hope that an attack on the Danube Army by parts of the Rumanian Army from Bucharest would save them was not fulfilled. In the operations east of the Aluta the orders were to press forward relentlessly and effect a junction of the two armies with their inner wings in the direction of Bucharest. I attached special importance to a rapid crossing of the Aluta by General Kühne's Group, in order to secure the left flank of the Danube Army. The other task of the 9th Army was to press up north from the plain towards the mountain frontier, thereby opening the mountain roads and enabling more of our troops to come down south.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen was to take over the command of the 9th Army also, as soon as the armies had really effected a

junction and proper liaison had been assured. The Danube Army was placed under the orders of General Kosch. The 9th Army was to be detached from the Archduke Charles' Group. Until all this was done the German G.H.Q. had to exercise direct command in the conduct of the operations.

The Danube Army started its forward march on November 25th. On the 26th they crossed the Vedea, and on the 30th their left wing, after heavy fighting, forced its way across the valley of the Nejlov south-west of Bucharest, while the right wing, keeping level with them, advanced down the Danube.

On the 27th the Alpine Corps had fought its way out of the Rotenturm Pass into the plain, had entered Pitesti on the 29th, and on the following day, by exerting their main pressure north of the Arges, gained ground to the south-east. This made it possible for the right wing of the Kronstadt group, which was involved in heavy fighting north of Campulung, to debouch from the mountains.

Further back stood General Kühne. His infantry divisions had made terrific efforts to force a crossing at Slatina, instead of immediately crossing farther south near Caracal, as the Cavalry Corps had done, and thus gaining time, in spite of having to make a detour. They only crossed the Aluta in the course of the 27th, and on the 30th were still about eighty kilometres from the left wing of the Danube Army and the right of Krafft's Group.

The Rumanian High Command had intended to hold up Generals von Krafft and Kühne, and attack the Danube Army. Their first object was apparently to hold these two groups on the mouths of the mountain passes at Curtea de Arges and Rimnicu Valcea and the line of the Aluta. When this was no longer possible, they tried again and again to make their 1st Army, fighting hard, stand on some line further back, so as to take full advantage even at the eleventh hour of their situation with regard to the Danube Army.

On December 1st the left wing of the Danube Army was very heavily attacked south-west of Bucharest and pushed back. The German troops who had already crossed the Nejlov were

cut off. The situation was certainly very critical. The enemy's enveloping movement was only stopped by a Turkish division, which was marching in the second line. The Rumanian attack was not pressed home; the right wing of the 9th Army was brought up with all possible speed to meet it. On December 2nd the cavalry of the 9th Army was in position on the action front of the Danube Army. On the 3rd we had infantry as well within reach and so the crisis was overcome. On the 4th we started a counter-attack, which was skilfully evaded by the Rumanians.

In the meantime, General Kühne's left wing had effected a junction with General Krafft's Group and forced back the Rumanian 1st Army eastward across the Arges. Henceforward the Danube Army and the 9th Army fought side by side. The success of the operation was assured.

It had not been easy to bring the two armies into close tactical co-operation. At the last moment, on the 1st December, the attempt had almost miscarried. Even in war, accidents of all kinds have to be reckoned with.

No sooner had this crisis been surmounted than we found ourselves faced with another. Would Bucharest be defended as a fortress or not? Such a defence would have been very awkward for us, for it would have prolonged the campaign in Rumania considerably. The season was already far advanced. We had to make preparations for the following year. All kinds of material necessary for attack had been placed in readiness, and everything possible had been done to hasten the fall of the fortress. A great load was taken off my mind when, on the 6th, the report was received that our cavalry divisions had in the night of the 5th–6th December found the northern works of the fortress unoccupied and blown up. On the 6th we were in possession of Bucharest, Ploesti and Campina. The Rumanians, under English orders and directions, had effected a very thorough destruction of the oil-fields.

So far the Russians had not taken any serious part in the fighting. A Russian thrust on December 5th, south-east of Bucharest, was of no importance. It is not easy to understand why they let the Rumanians be beaten before they came in;

they could very easily have sent forces to Wallachia. It was only because the Russians were not there that we were successful From this time onwards the Russians brought up reinforcements. They now seemed to fear for their own flank. They reduced their forces in the Dobrudja in order to be stronger in Wallachia. For the rest of the campaign the object in view was to strike an even more crushing blow at the Rumanians, defeat the Russians, whose arrival was now a certainty, while they were assembling, and bring the operations to a conclusion by reaching the Mouth of the Danube–Sereth–Trotus line. This was the shortest line we could take up. Our military-economic situation made it imperative that we should secure it.

Mackensen's Army Group was to exert its main pressure in the direction of Buzau–Focsani, break any attempts at resistance in the plain by an enveloping movement from the mountains, and for the rest, push forward down both banks of the Danube.

General von Conrad had agreed that the right wing of Archduke Charles' Army Group should later join in the attack on the Trotus.

The battles east of the Bucharest–Ploesti line now assumed a different character from their predecessors. Our troops were tired and could only attack the enemy frontally. The possibility of outflanking the enemy was only slight as he was increasing his forces, especially in the mountains. The Russians were soon in great strength; they fought better than the Rumanians. The supply of ammunition, which was now needed in larger quantities, was a slow business as communication had become much worse. Heavy rain set in, and was followed towards the new year by an unusually severe frost.

On December 10th the Danube Army and the 9th Army, on the Jalomnitsa and at Misil, south-east of Buzau, were facing the Rumanian and Russian troops in prepared positions. Yet they succeeded in quickly breaking down their resistance, crossing the Jalomnitsa on the 12th, and taking Buzau, after hard fighting, on the 15th.

On the 17th this Army Group was already in the plain before

another strong position between the Danube, near the mouth of the Calmatuiu, and the mountains to the south-west of Rimnicu Sarat. In the mountains west and north-west of those positions the Rumanians were in close touch with the troops facing the Archduke Charles' Army Group.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen had meanwhile ordered the Bulgarian 3rd Army also to advance up the right bank of the Danube. Without meeting any serious resistance, it pushed on as far as the mouth of this river, which was actually reached on the 24th of December. It then wheeled in the direction of the Braila right bank bridge-head, at and down stream from Macin. In the plain west of the Danube the Army Group could not attack until ammunition had been brought up. After a very violent struggle, the 9th Army broke through the Russian and Rumanian positions at Christmas and forced the enemy to withdraw his whole front towards the upper Sereth, more particularly in the direction of Braila and Focsani.

South of the Sereth, however, the enemy's resistance was in no way broken and fighting in Wallachia went on well into January. Our men were in sore need of rest. I was worried as to how I was to get them out of this corner again to the larger theatres of war. Everything possible had been done to put the Rumanian railways into working order again, but they could only cope with a very limited amount of traffic. We also made preparation to transport troops by way of the Danube, but with an unusually severe winter setting in, we had to reckon with the freezing up of the river. In spite of all our efforts, it would in any case take a long time to get all our troops away. At last, after another violent battle, the Danube Army took Braila on January 4th. It reached the Sereth, down stream to the confluence of the Buzau. Keeping touch with the Danube Army, the 9th Army had pushed forward to the Sereth in the course of continuous engagements in which the Russians pressed us particularly hard on the 6th. On the 8th, the 9th Army captured Focsani and the region north of the town as far as the Putna.

The attacks which the Archduke Charles' Army Group had

initiated about Christmas towards the Trotus had made no progress whatever. The great exhaustion of the troops, time and weather, all demanded the conclusion of the campaign. The line which Mackensen's Army Group now occupied was approximately the one we had intended to reach. The attack was broken off. The armies dug themselves in on the line on which they stood.

The second stage of the Rumanian campaign was over, thus bringing it to an end. It had been an operation rich in great deeds of valour of our brave troops, in tremendous decisions of the leaders, from junior officers to General Headquarters itself, in terrible anxieties also, which no one felt more intensely than I.

We had beaten the Rumanian Army; to annihilate it had proved impossible. We had done all that was possible, but found ourselves obliged to leave forces in the Dobrudja and Wallachia which we had been able to use on the East and West Fronts and in Macedonia before Rumania came into the war. In spite of our victory over the Rumanian Army, we were definitely weaker as regards the war position as a whole.

With the termination of the campaign in Rumania, the fighting of the autumn of 1916 was decidedly to our advantage. This triumph was obtained, not only on the battle-fields of Transylvania, Wallachia and the Dobrudja, where it had found its outward expression, but also in the struggle on the Western Front, on the Isonzo, in Macedonia and the East. It had been a concentration of our whole war strength with one aim—to ward off the Entente's onslaught and to retain the possibilities of existence. This onslaught had collapsed, and the resources of Wallachia were at our disposal. The immense superiority of the Entente in men and war material had been overcome by the bearing of our troops and the assurance and initiative of our leadership.

In defence, the German troops, in spite of many reverses, had proved their worth; the Austrian troops had succumbed to the Russians; the Bulgarians had frequently disappointed us, and the Turks had done what we expected of them.

In the battles of movement of the Rumanian campaign

German leadership had once more manifested its superiority. The German troops, carrying their Allies with them, had beaten a strong enemy through bold, independent action. Where we were on the defensive, the enemy had been successful only by employing masses of technical war material. Where that factor was absent, the German once more proved his superiority.

On all sectors of the vast front the German Army, as indeed every man individually, had given of its best, literally to the last ounce. This alone had made victory possible, a victory the laurels of which world-history will award to the German soldier. We now urgently needed a rest. The Army had been fought to a standstill and was utterly worn out.

The enemy, too, seemed weary. But they still had the strength to deliver their so successful blow near Verdun. Their superiority in numbers enabled them to relieve their troops more frequently. We had to reckon with their speedy recovery.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUMANIA, 1916

REFERENCE

- Rumanians.
- Allied attacks.
- Line reached by Allies on 30/11/16.
- Rumanian counter-attack against the Danube Army.
- Line reached by Allies on 6/12/16.
- " " " 10/12/16.
- " " " 17/12/16.
- " " " 8/1/17 at the close of the operations.

THE POSITION AT THE CLOSE OF 1916 AND BEGINNING OF 1917

I

NOTWITHSTANDING the successful close of the year 1916, the outlook for the coming year was exceedingly grave. It was certain that in 1917 the Entente would again make a supreme effort, not only to make good their losses, which they were certainly in a position to do, but to add to their strength everywhere and swell their superiority in numbers. Though they had not yet recovered, our worn-out troops would have to take the offensive as early as possible, and on a greater scale than in the autumn of 1916, if they were to achieve ultimate victory.

France had already given her children. The battalions now consisted of three, instead of four companies. But she possessed in her colonies extraordinary resources in man-power, on which she drew in ever-increasing measure.

England brought her army up to strength and set about increasing it.

Russia, in particular, produced very strong new formations. Divisions were reduced to twelve battalions, the batteries to six guns, and new divisions were formed out of the surplus fourth battalions and the seventh and eighth guns of each battery. This reorganization meant a great increase in strength.

The Rumanian Army was to be reorganized and trained by French officers. Thanks to the natural affinity of the two races and the influence of France on Rumanian thought, and particularly on the Rumanian Army, it was only to be expected

that the French officer would soon become familiar with the psychology of the Rumanian Army and accomplish a great deal.

We had to reckon with new formations of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war and Venizelist Greeks.

Against this Germany and her Allies had nothing to throw into the scale. The increase in the artillery which G.H.Q. had in view and the creation of thirteen new divisions which was under consideration, were not a real addition to our strength, as they weakened the existing formations. We could only form the infantry battalions by drawing on current reserves and reducing battalion strengths.

The creation of a Polish army would have been a real reinforcement, but it was soon seen that this would not be possible. There was nothing for it but to drain Germany and the allied countries of all their man-power that was in any way available.

An additional danger was added to the enemy's numerical superiority by the ever-increasing devotion of their industries to war purposes. Far-reaching restrictions on labour were passed into law in the Entente countries and accepted without serious protest; ample labour was available and there was no shortage of raw materials; the output per man had not fallen, and life, in short, pursued its normal course. The seas of the world were open to the Entente. The United States were now giving help on the largest scale and breaking new ground. The technical equipment of the Entente armies was continually increasing in quality as in quantity, reaching indeed an unprecedentedly high level. This was demonstrated with pitiless clarity on the Western Front. In the East, too, the campaign of 1916 had brought a very great increase in technical war material, especially in ammunition. Russia had established a war industry of her own, in part in the Donetz coal basin, and had greatly increased her output. Japan was steadily giving better deliveries. With the completion of the Murman railway and the improvement of the Trans-Siberian line, an increased import from Japan, America, England and France was inevitable. In every theatre of war the Entente was able to add to her numerical superiority enormous additional resources in every department of technical

supply, and to destroy our troops on a still greater scale than had been achieved on the Somme and at Verdun.

Much could be done, and had to be done, by our industries to increase our resources, but plainly no little time would elapse before any arrangements to this end could be carried into effect. It was clear that our munition factories, in spite of their immense output, and whatever labour they had at their disposal, were never in a position to overtake the enemy, so long as the enormous industrial areas of the latter continued to work undisturbed under what were virtually peace conditions. In the then circumstances, it seemed impossible to get on equal terms.

With our serious inferiority in numbers and equipment, training for defensive warfare became more important. It was obvious that we must strain every nerve to equip, organize and train our army. Everything possible was done. We knew, however, that the enemy would soon adapt himself to our new tactics, and that our advantage was only temporary.

G.H.Q. had to bear in mind that the enemy's great superiority in men and material would be even more painfully felt in 1917 than in 1916. They had to face the danger that "Somme fighting" would soon break out at various points on our fronts, and that even our troops would not be able to withstand such attacks indefinitely, especially if the enemy gave us no time for rest and for the accumulation of material. Our position was uncommonly difficult, and a way out hard to find. We could not contemplate an offensive ourselves, having to keep our reserves available for defence. There was no hope of a collapse of any of the Entente Powers. If the war lasted our defeat seemed inevitable. Economically we were in a highly unfavourable position for a war of exhaustion. At home our strength was badly shaken. Questions of the supply of foodstuffs caused great anxiety, and so, too, did questions of *moral*. We were not undermining the spirits of the enemy populations with starvation blockades and propaganda. The future looked dark, and our only comfort was to be found in the proud thought that we had hitherto succeeded in defying a superior enemy, and that our line was everywhere beyond our frontiers.

II

The Field-Marshal and I were fully at one in this anxious view of the situation. Our conclusion was no sudden one, but had gradually grown upon us since we took over our posts at the end of August, 1916. Accordingly, the construction had been begun as early as September of powerful rear positions in the West; the Siegfried line, running from Arras, west of Cambrai, St. Quentin, La Fère, Vailly-sur-Aisne, to get rid of the great Albert-Roye-south-west of Noyon-Soissons-Vailly-sur-Aisne salient, in which the Somme fighting had made a large indentation; and south of Verdun the Michael line, in front of the Etain–Gorz line, to straighten out the salient of St. Mihiel. These strategic positions had the advantage of shortening the front and economizing men, and their occupation according to plan was prepared. Whether we should retire on them, and how the positions would be used, was not of course decided in September, 1916; the important thing then was to get them built. This made comprehensive measures necessary and I made heavy demands for labour from home. All this, however, only sufficed for the West, and corresponding positions in the East had to be left unbuilt.

The construction of positions, the training of the army for defensive warfare, and the exploitation of home resources were of vital importance for carrying on the war. They were sufficient to postpone the decision, if the Government once succeeded in bringing the people whole-heartedly to support the war, but they could never lead to victory. The future was thus full of obscurity. The soldier dare not rely on chance, so that the questions of peace and submarine warfare became of tremendous importance. There was the problem of obtaining peace, the chance of defeat without unrestricted submarine warfare and the possibility of victory by means of such a campaign, accompanied by an attack by our surface fleet and a defensive war on land.

The term " unrestricted submarine warfare " is not wholly apt, any more than is " submarine warfare without regard to consequences."

In September, 1916, the Chancellor was giving consideration to the proposed mediation of President Wilson with a view to peace. Such a step was regarded in many quarters in Germany with the greatest disfavour, as the attitude of benevolence adopted by the U.S.A. towards the Entente had roused increasing bitterness among us. The Government could not lightly disregard this feeling. The Chancellor nevertheless proposed to His Majesty that instructions should be given to Ambassador Count Bernstorff to induce the President at the earliest possible moment, and in any case before the presidential election at the beginning of November, to make a peace offer to the Powers. I was fully in agreement with the suggestion, and inwardly very pleased that it was made although I was sceptical of success owing to my view of the enemy's desire for our destruction. Their prospects for 1917 were so much more favourable than ours that, even while I hoped for it, I had grave doubts as to the success of any step by President Wilson. I waited with the greatest anxiety to learn whether he would make a proposal in October; but his re-election in November and the whole of that month passed without his making up his mind to it. I now relied no longer on his intervention.

Baron Burian now came forward with the proposal that the Quadruple Alliance should itself take action and make a direct offer of peace to the enemy. I was equally sceptical as to the success of this scheme, but thought that it should be tried; only it was essential to avoid anything that looked like weakness. This would have had a very bad effect on the army and the public, and would have encouraged the Entente to redouble their efforts for our destruction. So far as he permitted, I co-operated with the Chancellor in the matter. In order to avoid giving the enemy the false impression that weakness was our motive for the proposal, I asked that it should not be carried out until the campaign in Rumania had been brought to a conclusion. Bucharest fell on the 6th December, and with that I regarded

the military position as so secure that I had no objection to the publication of the Peace Note. The proposal for compulsory auxiliary service, which had meanwhile been passed into law, gave the appearance of a determination to continue fighting if our offer were rejected.

His Majesty took a most earnest interest in the peace offer, displaying clearly his high sense of his responsibility to bring peace to the world at the earliest possible moment. On the 12th December, the peace offer of the Quadruple Alliance was made. There followed an exchange of views as to the peace terms which we should be prepared to offer which was destined to culminate in the despatch to Count Bernstorff of the 29th January, 1917.

The reception of our offer by the Entente Press was wholly unfavourable. It soon became clear that it would be impossible to come to an understanding. The Entente had their hands tied by arrangements and secret agreements that could only be carried out if we were completely defeated. The answer of the Entente, given on the 30th December, was such as to leave no doubt of their intention to annihilate us. Their objection, that the tone of our offer had from the first made any acceptance impossible, will not hold water. Our whole position compelled us to adopt a tone of confidence. I advocated this from the military point of view also. Our troops had done marvels; what would they do if we adopted any other tone? It was essential that the peace offer should not impair the fighting capacity of the army; and it did not do so, for it was only an episode, and the *moral* of the troops was still good. If the Entente honestly desired a peace of justice and reconciliation, they could and should have entered into negotiations and brought forward their demands. Had negotiations broken down before any demand for annexations on the part of the German representatives, it would have been easy for the Entente, in view of such an attitude, to rouse their peoples to renew the war. We, on the other hand, in such a position would have been quite unable to reconcile the German people, already longing for peace, to any further fighting. Still less would our weary allies have

continued to fight at our side. This simple reasoning shows convincingly that when we made our offer, we were genuinely ready for a peace of justice and reconciliation.

The Entente's rejection of our advances, on this and every subsequent occasion, shows equally clearly that they did not want negotiations that might reveal to the world our sincere desire for peace. They feared that this would lead to a weakening of the desire for our destruction in their own camp, and wished also that peace, when it came, should be definitely a peace of defeat and prostration for us.

Meanwhile President Wilson had at last, on the 18th December, addressed a Note to all the belligerent Powers, inviting an expression of " their views as to the terms on which the war could be brought to an end." The President apparently desired to compare the demands of both sides and arrive at a compromise. He had in mind a peace without victors or vanquished. The Note was delivered on the 21st December. The German Government had been informed of the President's intention in November. After his long hesitation they were by this time in doubt as to whether the President would in fact carry out his intention. I do not, however, know their line of reasoning in any detail.

As early as the 26th December the Governments of the Quadruple Alliance proposed an early conference of representatives of the belligerents in some neutral country. They were at variance with Wilson's proposals to the extent that they preferred direct negotiations with their opponents; this may well have been, in part, due to regard for the strong trend of public opinion in Germany against the United States. The Entente, however, remained wholly unconciliatory. Their answer of the 12th January was a confirmation of the Note of the 30th December, perhaps even still more strongly imbued with their lust of destruction. This answer voiced the iron will of Lloyd George who at the beginning of December had formally taken over the reins of Government in England. It is useful to re-read the Entente Notes on our offer of peace and Wilson's Note. The judgment of many people as to the possibility of a peace of understanding will then become clearer

Thus failed the two efforts to bring peace nearer. By the will of the Entente the war had to continue and to be decided by force of arms. It was to be Victory or Defeat. The results were further preparations on a large scale, the maintenance of our determination to fight—this our proposals were designed to achieve—and at the same time the employment of every weapon in Germany's arsenal.

III

The Field-Marshal and myself, in our view of the whole situation and in our scepticism, unfortunately justified, as to the success of the peace proposals, had already had under consideration, as part of our military problems, the possibility of carrying on submarine operations in the intensified form of the "War Zone" campaign. Unrestricted submarine warfare was now the only means left to secure a victorious end to the war within a reasonable time. If submarine warfare in this form could have a decisive effect—and the Navy held that it could—then in the existing situation it was our plain military duty to the German nation to embark on it.

As has been mentioned, we had both spoken against the proposal for unrestricted warfare on the 30th August, on the ground that the time was not yet ripe for it. Chancellor von Bethmann stated this quite clearly at the time and added that thenceforth the decision to carry on the submarine campaign in the form of a "War Zone" would depend on the declaration of the Field-Marshal; that is to say, unrestricted submarine warfare was to start when the Field-Marshal wished it to start. The Chancellor spoke to the same effect in the Reichstag on the 28th September. The question of the expediency of the submarine campaign had meanwhile led to grave differences of opinion among the political parties, and had roused unusually strong feeling. While the parties of the Right were enthusiastically in favour of its adoption, the Left, which was more in touch with the Government, was equally strongly opposed. Von

Bethmann's statement for the first time brought G.H.Q. into the field of politics to support the Government. This I regretted deeply. It ought not to have happened. G.H.Q. had consistently held aloof from all political activity, and had no wish to alter its policy in this respect. This made the political excitement roused by von Bethmann's step all the more embarrassing to the Field-Marshal and myself. Nevertheless, G.H.Q. came, in fact, more and more to be regarded as responsible for the adoption or non-adoption of unrestricted submarine warfare.

At the beginning of October we had discussed unrestricted submarine warfare with the Chief of the Naval Staff, also the question when to begin it. In the course of the correspondence opened by the Chancellor on the matter, we again urged him on the 5th October to settle the question of responsibility. He replied on the 6th, with the statement that the decision really lay with the Emperor, as War Lord of the Empire, but that it was also a question of foreign policy, owing to its effect on neutrals. The Chancellor was therefore, constitutionally, the only person responsible, and could not transfer the burden to anyone else; but the judgment of the Field-Marshal would naturally have the greatest weight with him. This standpoint was incontestable. The Field-Marshal was not in a position to relieve the Chancellor of any of his responsibility, and had never even thought of doing so; I fully agreed with him. The Chancellor's declaration was, however, a substantial change of front when compared to his earlier statements which had been made on the assumption that we were opposed to the submarine warfare.

In October, 1916, submarine-cruiser warfare began, ships being stopped and searched. This met with good success, and had an embarrassing effect on the economic situation of the enemy. It spoke well for the submarine weapon. Soon however the enemy's defensive measures against our boats were improved, and results fell off considerably.

In estimating the economic effects of the various forms of submarine warfare we were compelled to rely on the judgment of the Chief of the Naval Staff and of the Chancellor. G.H.Q.

was in constant communication with both these authorities on the whole matter, and in particular on the question of the expediency of unrestricted warfare.

After our victories in Rumania, G.H.Q. no longer expected that either Holland or Denmark would enter the war against us. It was, however, unwise to take any risks ; the unrestricted campaign could obviously not be begun before the Rumanian campaign was at an end and our troops there had returned home and arrived on the Western and Eastern Fronts. It was soon clear that this would not be the case before the beginning of February. It also seemed plain that we should have to hold our hands to see, first, whether any success would be achieved by the intervention of President Wilson on the lines on which our Government had invited it in September, and also the effect of our own offer of peace. If the end of the war should appear to be in sight, submarine warfare on the lines proposed would be no longer necessary. All discussion was to no purpose. The result of our efforts for peace would be sure to be known by the end of December or early in January, and this, too, pointed to the beginning of February as the date for opening the unrestricted campaign, if that should prove necessary.

The Government had by now lost its earlier anxiety as to the attitude of Holland and Denmark, and none was felt as to Switzerland, Spain, Sweden or Norway. On the other hand, it was regarded as practically certain that the United States would come into the war against us. G.H.Q. had to take into account, in dealing with the military situation, the views thus expressed in responsible quarters. It would involve an addition to the armed forces of the Entente of five or six divisions in the first year after America entered the war, and later on, if the submarine war failed, a serious, indeed a vital, increase in the strength of the enemy. It could not be doubted that America, if she came into the war, would arm herself in the same way that England had done, and that the Entente would lead the United States from one energetic step to another. I had, however, no serious fear as to any increased output of munitions in the States. They were already working with all their might for the Entente.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, a friend of the Chancellor, but at the same time a warm partisan of the unrestricted submarine war, was confident that the campaign would have decisive results within six months. The loss of freight space and the reduction of oversea imports would produce economic difficulties in England that would render a continuance of the war impossible. In forming this view he did not rely merely on his own professional judgment, but was also supported by the opinions of distinguished German economists. The shortage of shipping would cut down the transport of munitions, and in particular the huge transport of war material from England to France which could also be attacked directly. The number of submarines in commission was sufficient for this work and our Admiralty was also of the opinion that construction, if it was pressed on to the utmost, would amply cover losses. In 1916, after submarine warfare had been abandoned in principle, construction had not in fact been pressed on very vigorously. The question of crews could, it was thought, be solved. They would have to be drawn mainly from the second-line fleet, which consisted of the oldest ships, but the other vessels also would have to release officers and engineers of a certain seniority.

The surface fleet was not, of course, to fall below a certain standard of strength. In face of the enemy sea-power, which was continually being increased by new construction and might be further increased by the entry of America into the war, it was essential that our fleet should be maintained at sufficient strength to ensure the effective carrying through of the submarine campaign. It had the duty of ensuring the passage of the submarines through the enemy mine fields. It remained, at the same time, sufficiently formidable to thwart every attempt of the enemy to interrupt sea traffic in the Baltic.

The Chief of the Naval Staff also hoped that the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare would frighten neutral shipping which had, up to then, been of great assistance to the Entente He was quite convinced of the necessity for the strongest support, in political quarters, on this point, which, as it turned out, he did not always obtain.

The amount of shipping necessary for the transport of troops from America to France and for the supply of reinforcements was discussed. Our navy reckoned that the freight space required for the transport of an army with supplies and reinforcements amounted to at least five British register tons per man. This estimate was confirmed by our experience in the attack on Oesel in the autumn of 1917. Calculations pointed to a result favourable to us. It would thus be necessary, in order to transport 1,000,000 American soldiers in a reasonable time, to employ 5,000,000 tons of shipping space. Such a quantity of shipping, in view of the necessity for maintaining supplies to the Western Powers, could not be spared, even temporarily.

The economic value of the campaign was the subject of varying opinion in our Government. The Ministry of the Interior gradually came round (only after the campaign had begun) to a favourable view, in which the Imperial Chancellor supported them.

With my knowledge of the military situation and my high opinion of the enemy's determination, I did not accept literally the estimates of our Admiralty as to the probable effects of unrestricted submarine warfare. I knew, moreover, that questions of transport and of economics generally are very difficult to determine. I did, however, think it safe to reckon that it would at least have a decisive effect within twelve months, that is to say, before America could throw her new armies into the scale. I hoped that, with the measures already taken and to be taken, we could hold out for this period on land, assuming that the submarine campaign caused sufficient disturbance of the enemy's industries to reduce their output of war material and cut down substantially their shipments of munitions to France. For the first few months I attributed the greatest importance to this.

I was greatly impressed with the seriousness of the position by a tour which I took of the Western Front in the middle of December, with a view to reviewing the whole situation. I telegraphed my views to Berlin. At that time I had already abandoned hope of any success from our offer of peace. On

the 23rd December, the Field-Marshal, in the presence of the Chancellor, expounded more fully his view that the adoption of unrestricted submarine warfare was essential. The latter, on the 24th, stated that he was ready to initiate discussion on the matter so soon as the answer expected from the Entente to our peace proposal had brought the matter more or less to finality; he repeated, however, his declaration of the 6th October to the effect that the adoption of the campaign was a question of foreign policy and that he and he alone bore and could bear the constitutional responsibility for the step. Our view of this question had not changed. The Chancellor had his responsibilities and we had ours. In a telegram to von Bethmann the Field-Marshal made his position clear in the following words: "... Your Excellency as Chancellor can, of course, claim the sole responsibility, but I must clearly work, with all my strength and with a full sense of my responsibility, for the victorious end of the war, to secure that everything is done which I hold as proper for the achievement of that end." That was the right and duty of General Headquarters, just as it was the right and duty of the Chancellor, in this difficult and momentous question, to support his own opinion with all the prestige of his high office. If there were differences of opinion, the decision lay with His Majesty.

As it seemed probable that the answer of the Entente, both to our offer of peace and to Wilson's proposal for intervention, would be a refusal, the Chancellor came to Pless to discuss the question as early as the end of December, but nothing definite was then decided. The actual decision was arrived at on the 9th January, at a meeting presided over by His Majesty, after the receipt of the answer to our peace offer, and in the certainty that a like reply would be given to President Wilson. The Chief of the Naval Staff expressed the views stated above; he advised that the campaign would be decisive in a few months and urged its adoption. The Field-Marshal reported our view of the situation, and also advised its adoption. The Chancellor stated the effect the use of this weapon might have upon neutrals, and in particular upon the United States. He thought it possible, and indeed

probable, that the States would enter the war, and anticipated difficulties with regard to the provisioning of Belgium by the Entente. He regarded our offer of peace as having failed; he saw no other possibility of achieving peace, not even by a new attempt on the part of Wilson (the Note of the 18th December might be taken to have failed). He had no hope of a separate peace, and he did not anticipate any improvement in our position through the collapse of one of our enemies, such as subsequently happened in the case of Russia. The likelihood of this happening would, of course, have altered the whole situation, and would have had the greatest weight with us in our decisions. The Chancellor's judgment as to our military position was the same as our own. While we felt compelled resolutely to draw the inevitable and serious inference, and act on it, the Chancellor, as his nature was, remained undecided and came to such conclusions as: "The decision to embark on the campaign depends on the effects which are to be expected from it;" and: "If the military authorities regard it as essential, I am not in a position to withstand them;" and: "If success beckons, we must act."

However, with a full sense of his political responsibility, the Chancellor did advise the adoption of the campaign, as did His Majesty's other advisers. The Emperor fell in with their views and commanded that the campaign should open on the 1st February. He directed, however, that time should be given to neutral vessels in the blockaded area to leave it, and to neutral vessels on their way to the area to complete their voyages.

The Chancellor then prepared, in co-operation with the Chief of the Naval Staff, the notes to neutral Powers as to the declaration of the blockade area around England, along the West Coast of France and in the Mediterranean. These were to be delivered on the 31st January.

The Chief of the Naval Staff gave the detailed instructions for operations in the blockade area, making various concessions to the wishes of the Foreign Office in order to lessen the danger of a rupture with America. We were, of course, quite in agreement with such a course.

G.H.Q. on its side took certain precautionary measures in the Northern Army district, in order to be ready for all eventualities, although the Chancellor had no anxiety as to the attitude of Holland and Denmark.

The construction of defensive positions in Northern Schleswig had made good progress and there was no need to do more than reinforce the frontier guard with a few cavalry. An army corps staff was moved thither temporarily, in order to obtain information as to local conditions. On our Dutch frontier the frontier troops were grouped in divisional formations and placed under an army corps staff that was stationed at Münster. The construction of defensive works was here much in arrears. Not too much had been done, either, on the Dutch-Belgian frontier, owing to shortage of labour. For the rest, our defensive measures were merely worked out on paper. The troops released from the operations in Rumania were to carry them out only if necessity arose, and were otherwise to be employed on the Western Front. They were in the first instance moved into Belgium.

IV

In the middle of January G.H.Q. received from the Foreign Office a transcript of a dispatch from Count Bernstorff of the 10th January, to the effect that the Note dealing with armed merchant vessels "would frustrate President Wilson's proposals for intervening to negotiate peace." This surprised me, as all idea of any definite intervention by the President had vanished. Count Bernstorff could not be referring to anything else than the step taken by the President on the 18th December, which was not officially answered by the Entente until the 12th January, but was definitely put an end to by that answer, as we had anticipated. I was unaware of any new step or proposal, and so was the Chancellor. He accordingly replied to Bernstorff on the 16th January: "We are resolved to take the risk" (of rupture and possibly of war with the United States). This cablegram had probably not reached Count Bernstorff when he

cabled again to the Foreign Office : " Unless military considerations are absolutely decisive, it would be highly desirable to postpone " (the unrestricted warfare). " Wilson believes he can secure peace on the basis proposed by us of equality of rights for all nations."

In forwarding us this cablegram, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs wrote that he had urged the Chief of the Naval Staff to lessen the danger of a rupture with America by fixing certain definite periods of grace for neutral ships, which the Ambassador had proposed. I at once replied that we agreed to this: It is clear that the Foreign Office had not concluded, even from this second communication from Bernstorff, that there was any modification of the general situation, for the Secretary would otherwise have mentioned it.

I never had a clear understanding of the correspondence between the Government and the Ambassador; indeed, I only learnt of it by degrees.

I knew nothing of the progress of the negotiations with the United States. The Chancellor and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs complained of the difficulties of communication with the Ambassador and of the resulting ambiguities. They had, of course, to do everything possible to avoid a rupture with the United States, in spite of the existence of the unrestricted campaign.

On the 29th January, unexpectedly, so far as I was concerned, Chancellor von Bethmann and Secretary Dr. Zimmermann arrived at Pless. We were summoned to a discussion with the Emperor over a new proposal for intervention by President Wilson. The Chancellor read a dispatch which he had drafted for transmission to Count Bernstorff, in which he proposed that we should declare for peace on the *status quo ante* basis.

So far as I remember, the dispatch proposed the submission to President Wilson, then or on some later occasion, of the following claims as the basis for possible peace negotiations :

" Restoration of the portions of Upper Alsace occupied by France ;

" A frontier securing Germany and Poland strategically and economically against Russia ;

" Restoration of colonies on the basis of an agreement securing to Germany colonial possessions corresponding to her population and her economic interests ;

" Return to France of the territory occupied by Germany, subject to strategic and economic rectification of frontiers, and to financial compensation :

" Restoration of Belgium, subject to definite guarantees for Germany's safety, which would be negotiated with the Belgian Government ;

" Economic and financial adjustment on the basis of the exchange of conquered territories given up by either side to the other on the conclusion of peace ;

" Indemnity to German concerns or private persons injured by the war ;

" Renunciation of all economic measures or treaties calculated to interfere after the conclusion of peace with normal trade or communication, and the conclusion of the commercial agreements necessary thereto.

" The guaranteeing of the freedom of the seas."

These are the only German conditions which ever reached the enemy from our side with any co-operation on my part.

The Chancellor did not suggest a postponement of the unrestricted campaign, but the Ambassador was authorized to explain that our Government was ready to order the cessation of the campaign immediately any basis for peace negotiations was worked out that offered any real hope of success. The Field-Marshal and I agreed to this.

The whole discussion took place in one of the Emperor's rooms, and occupied but little time. The Emperor's birthday presents were still lying about, and I remember in particular a fine picture of the cruiser *Emden*. I know no more than the above as to the circumstances surrounding this diplomatic step, nor the course which it followed. I mentioned to the Field-Marshal, after the discussion was over, my resentment at the manner in which our co-operation in these tremendously important decisions had been

obtained. Although we had no clear knowledge of the situation, we had to bear the moral responsibility.

On the 31st January our Note as to the declaration of the submarine campaign was delivered in Washington, as also, I assume, was the Government's above-mentioned proposal of the 29th January.

After the 9th January there were no military reasons whatever to cause either the Field-Marshal or myself to modify our views as to the urgent need for the unrestricted campaign.

According to a report from the Chief of the Naval Staff in Vienna, the Austro-Hungarian Government also decided to wage unrestricted warfare with their submarines. I welcomed with gratitude this loyal act on the part of our allies, which I had, of course, confidently expected. The new campaign could only be really effective if it included the Mediterranean, where prospects of success seemed particularly good ; the important thing was to sink as much shipping as possible. General von Conrad had also advocated the adhesion of Austria to the campaign.

When later, in 1918, Count Czernin stated that he had adopted this policy in order to avoid a quarrel with Germany, he stated something that was quite new to me. There was never any idea of bringing military pressure to bear on Austria-Hungary.

In judging public opinion on the matter at home, I regarded as a very important element the sitting of the Reichstag of the 27th February, in which it appeared that, after the failure of our peace offer, the German people were practically unanimous in supporting the Government. The leader of the Majority Socialists, Herr Scheidemann, while refusing any responsibility for the submarine campaign, spoke as follows :

" Everyone will understand the deep satisfaction which we felt when we learnt that the Government had made an offer of peace to the world, based on arguments similar to our own. When the enemy's notorious reply to Wilson stripped the veil from their plans for conquest and annihilation, the determination to defend our country resolutely was again restored. The people cried with one voice : Anything rather than such a peace! No one had expected that the enemy would accept the German

invitation to a conference without some show of reluctance, without emphasizing their own strength, without a certain manœuvring for position and preliminary negotiation; but it is equally certain that no one had anticipated a tone so brutal and provocative, or a peace programme so extravagant, so utterly at variance with the facts of the situation. They will never wipe away the stain of the crime against humanity committed by their brutal refusal of Germany's peace offer. Lloyd George is the true godfather of our Government's resolution to adopt the unrestricted submarine campaign. This campaign was decided by the conference of the Allies in Rome. Once this resolution has been taken, and the campaign has begun, we, too, can but hope with all our hearts that it will bring us peace quickly. We trust in the national strength, now fully mobilized, to achieve what our enemies hold to be impossible. Our honour, our existence, our free economic development, must come unimpaired out of this terrible struggle."

That was a noble profession of faith, and in the face of the enemy's will to annihilation a call to fight to the last. One hoped that it might be realized.

V

On the 21st November, 1916, the Emperor Francis Joseph passed to his long rest. The cohesion of the peoples of the Dual Monarchy had depended on him. He had not, it is true, succeeded in giving new life to the Monarchy, for the advisers whom he chose were not strong enough for the task. He was a loyal friend of the alliance, even if he never forgot 1866, when Prussia and Austria had fought for the hegemony of Germany.

At the beginning of April, 1916, the fiftieth anniversary of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg's entry into the service was celebrated in Kovno. I made a short speech on that occasion, and chanced to mention, without adding any comment, that the Field-Marshal, in the first year of his service, had taken part in the campaign of 1866. My speech had hardly been reported

when I received a letter from Chancellor von Bethmann, to the effect that offence had been caused in Vienna by my reference to the campaign of 1866. He begged me to prevent it being reported, but that was already impossible. I was as much surprised by the attitude of the Vienna Court as by the letter from Berlin. The 1866 campaign, it appears, had left a deep and permanent impression on the Emperor Francis Joseph. In that campaign he had lost his confidence in his Army, and he never fully regained it, although he worked hard for it, and held high the old traditions of his Imperial Army.

His death was an irreparable loss to us.

The murdered heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was not the man of action he was commonly held to be. Indeed, he was naturally vacillating and irresolute, and by no means friendly to Germany. Our Emperor made great efforts to turn the Archduke and his wife to a friendly attitude to us. His death was a tragedy and its results have been disastrous. They have brought on Austria, after four years of war, the fate that Russia, the real author of the tragedy, intended. True, Russia has ruined herself in the process. The murdered heir would not have been the man to have taken over the guidance of the Dual Monarchy after the death of the aged Emperor; the separatist tendencies had grown too strong during the war. Mismanagement had increased. In many quarters there was bad feeling both in the Army and at home. War weariness was growing, and the longing for peace was greater every day. It would have required no ordinary man to restore the fighting spirit of the Dual Monarchy and bring new life into the Austro-Hungarian Army.

I first saw the Emperor Charles, when he was still only Archduke, in December, 1914. He gave an impression of extreme youthfulness. At the beginning of November, 1916, I saw him again. He had developed and become more manly. He spoke well on military subjects. The burden of his new and high position was, however, to become too heavy for him. Troubles began to crowd in on him. He attempted much, and at the same time gave way to many men and in many matters. He was

conscious of the internal political difficulties of the Dual Monarchy, and had plans for a league of the peoples of Austria under the house of Hapsburg; at the same time he was unable to persuade the Hungarians to a less selfish policy, and could not make them abandon their food blockade against Austria. It was characteristic of him that he pardoned the Czech leaders who had openly worked against the Monarchy; his fear of the Czech movement, and the whole weakness of the Government and the Monarchy, were rendered notorious by this conduct. The only consequence was an encouragement of the separatist tendencies among his non-German peoples, and grave mistrust among his Germans, who stood firm in their loyalty to their Imperial House. The Army, too, felt it as a slight, especially the German officers and men, who were fighting courageously for the Imperial House and the Dual Monarchy. Countless numbers of their German brothers had met their death on the field of battle through Czech troops going over to the enemy.

The Emperor Charles, although by no means a convinced supporter of the alliance, held firmly to Germany. He wanted peace, but in his anxiety to achieve it he went too far in his letters to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus.

The Emperor Charles attached great importance to his position as Supreme War Lord of the Austro-Hungarian Army. At his wish the arrangements we had come to as regards a unified command for the forces of the Quadruple Alliance were altered and somewhat weakened. Without being truly soldierly, he wanted to give his best to his Army.

The Empress Zita, who had great influence over her husband, had strong political opinions. She was unfortunately wholly unfriendly to us, and in the hands of the Clericals who were not well disposed to Germany.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs was Count Czernin, a clever man of wide experience. He was an educated and amiable personality, and far above the Wilhelmstrasse. In the main, he pursued the same path as the Chancellor in Berlin. He desired peace, but only hand in hand with Germany. He must be given this tribute of praise, that he was loyal. At the same

time he always upheld, and with uncommon ability, the interests of the Dual Monarchy. In dealing with his Imperial master he showed calmness and firmness. Nevertheless, he lent his authority to the pardon of the Czechs, and to the Emperor's vacillating policy toward the subject peoples. He remained in office, although he did not approve of the pardon, and although this step, symptomatic as it was of the impending collapse of the Dual Monarchy, was bound to make peace more difficult, and to strengthen the hopes of the Entente for victory.

Personally I had a great liking for the Count, and took no little pleasure in his conversation. Unfortunately he was too ready to repeat the Wilhelmstrasse gossip about my "dictatorship." I often explained to him how unfounded this supposition was. His political confession of 11th December, 1918, was no surprise to me, having regard to his general view of the war.

General von Arz was made Chief of the General Staff of the Austro-Hungarian Army, in the place of General von Conrad, who took over the command of the Army Group on the Tirol front. I had always been on terms of the greatest confidence with General von Conrad, so that from the personal point of view I saw this great General leave his office with unmixed regret.

My relations with General von Arz were, however, to become even more intimate. He was a convinced friend of the German Empire and the German Army. During the summer campaign of 1915 he had commanded the 6th Austro-Hungarian Army Corps as part of the 11th Army, and in close co-operation with German troops had led it with such ability as to earn for himself and his corps the highest German regard. As Commander of the 1st Army in Transylvania he did everything that was humanly possible in view of its composition. He endeavoured to establish cordial relations between the German and the Austro-Hungarian troops in his army, and devoted himself wholeheartedly to their training. Perhaps not so agile of mind as General von Conrad, he was a soldier of sound grasp, who did his utmost to improve the Austrian Army, and make the country give it everything it needed. He did all that could be done,

though that was not in any sense decisive. He improved, the longer he remained in office.

General von Arz selected as his Director of Operations General von Waldstätten, a capable and ambitious officer, who earned the confidence of his chief and the Army.

Satisfactory co-operation between ourselves and the Austrian Headquarters was thus a certainty for the future.

THE BASIS OF FUTURE OPERATIONS AND OUR WAR MACHINE

I

THE war called on us to gather together and throw into the scale the last ounce of our strength, either in the fighting line or behind the lines in our war industries or other work at home, or in Government service. Each citizen could only serve his country in one post, but in some way his strength should be used to that end. Service to the State was the important thing. In general the distribution of man-power between the army, the navy, and home services was carried out by the General Staff in co-operation with the civil officials concerned. The former alone could supervise the whole matter in detail, for even the Prussian Minister of War had but an insufficient and partial view of the forces at the enemy's disposal and the needs of the situation.

Up to this time, the army in the field had received adequate reinforcements from returned wounded (of whom, thanks to our admirable medical service, a very high proportion came back to the line), from the yearly classes as they were called up, and from re-examinations and comb-outs. We were forced to send men of 19 to the Front ; younger men could not be sent. The medical standards were reduced, and the vast majority of the available men called up. It was still necessary, however, not merely to send into the army all the men then available, but also to find some new source of supply. In particular it was vital to reduce the numbers of exemptions. At the same time, we had to find the labour needed for the work behind the lines, where

the construction of positions was of simply incalculable importance, and to keep up the war industries at home.

" Fit for garrison duty only " was always a thorn in my side. When everything was at stake, why should not the garrison duty man, who was employed in the field, carry a rifle as much as the " general service " man ? The men, however, looked on their garrison duty classification as a sort of passport to safety. G.H.Q. never succeeded in adjusting this conception to the urgency of the army's needs or in getting rid of the ill effects of this expression. An order of the Minister of War, issued in the autumn of 1918, was too late to do any good. In the meantime, the standard of fitness for general service had been again revised, and below the class of " garrison duty in the field or at home " there was created another, " labour duty."

The system of re-examination and control generally at home seemed to me to be defective. Complaints of the most incredible shirking were always being made. I urged the War Ministry to act energetically, which was only bare justice. I was never able to feel, however, that in this respect things were as they should be, having regard to the spirit of the army and the public.

The law left untouched labour that should have been devoted to the State. The duty of service was only laid on men between 17 and 45. I regarded this limitation as quite inappropriate in view of the iron necessities of the war.

As early as September, 1916, the Chancellor received the first demands of G.H.Q. for the ruthless requisition of all our manpower. We insisted emphatically on the point of view that in war the powers of every citizen are at the disposal of the State, and that accordingly every German from 15 to 60 should be under an obligation to serve, an obligation which, with certain limitations, lay on women too. The duty could be fulfilled by service at the Front, or by work, in the widest sense, at home, and was in no sense limited to workmen in the ordinary meaning of the word, although it, of course, fell mainly on them.

The introduction of compulsion for war services was of the greatest moral importance, placing as it did every German at the service of the State in these anxious times, in accordance with

the oldest principles of German law. It should also have had the great practical advantage of giving the Government the control over rates of wages. It was one of the most crying injustices of the war—and must have been so felt by the troops—that they, who were risking their lives daily, were much worse off than any of the workmen who lived in safety. While the soldier was fighting for himself, his wife and children, he could only think with anxiety of his future and the maintenance of his family. The separation allowances were in no way sufficient. The longing to get back home, which could be sufficiently explained by the desire for personal safety, had also a higher motive in family affection. The same feeling kept many a man at home, and gave to service at the front an air of punishment. This was a thoroughly unsatisfactory position.

The pay of the fighting men should have been raised—and I attempted, without any real success in the face of official opposition at home, to have it raised—and the wages of workmen should have been kept down to a reasonable level. This would, of course, have involved the limitation of war profits also, for wages and profits necessarily stand in close relation to each other. Such a course would have saved considerable sums, thus easing our budget and conserving our capital. I was not unaware of the difficulties of the problem, having regard to the universal rise in prices due to the shortage of raw materials, but I hoped that the Home country would solve it and discover a method of reaching a sound position. A law establishing the general duty of service would have shown the way.

The introduction of general conscription, coupled with that of compulsory labour, was not of itself sufficient. It was essential, too, to secure that the labour thus obtained was profitably used, and that the State did not lose the benefit of it.

It was quite clear to me that measures of this sort would involve far-reaching interference with administration, trade, and private life. It was also not to be forgotten that too many restrictions tend to stultify individual effort. Opposition was bound to arise, even when the demands made did no more than correspond with the iron necessity of the war. Self-seeking and

profiteering were already firmly rooted. We had, however, to show the people the way to victory, to make them see the facts clearly and settle their own destiny. The Reichstag, and with it the whole people, had to share the responsibility. On the 30th October, 1916, the Chancellor was urgently requested to work for that end. I hoped that the Government would be prepared to adopt the great principle of universal service, and to bring the people to consider what further powers and resources they could yet devote to their country. It required an unselfish understanding on the part of the people to shake themselves free from the self-seeking of domestic politics, to devote themselves wholly to the war, and to translate into action the proposals of G.H.Q.

The Government did not take these steps. I had still at that time unlimited confidence in the German people and the German working class. The war was life and death for us all; this should be made clear to the workers, and then, as I believed, they would be certain, in their knowledge of the great danger threatening them and their country, to range themselves behind G.H.Q., and give even more than they had done. The German workman had already done wonders, but he could still do more. Just as troops, in the hour of peril, are enabled to do their utmost through patriotism inculcated by discipline, so in a long war the nation is held together and kept on its feet by firm leadership and a clear conception of the danger threatening the country. The enthusiasm of the moment passes. That is inevitable, and it must be replaced by discipline and understanding. That this could be achieved, I had no doubt.

Even without any new legislation the Government could help us. The State of Siege and War Services laws gave the necessary powers to obtain the labour required, but resolution was required to apply them properly. The Government lacked that resolution. The administration of these laws, however, would amount to a mere application of force, from which, on reflection, I saw little hope of real success. I thought that it would be better to have a special law supported by the approval of the whole people, one which would make plain to the whole world

our determination to hold out. This, too, I explained to the Chancellor.

At last, after two months' delay, and prolonged and unedifying pressure from G.H.Q., the Government made up its mind, in November, to introduce into the Reichstag the Auxiliary Service Bill, which was passed on the 2nd December. It was neither fish nor fowl. We wanted something wholesale. The bill departed, too, from the principle of universal liability to service, which we had laid down in September, and gave no security that the labour power obtained would be so employed as to produce the maximum results. In practice the law, largely owing to the manner in which it was administered, was but a shadow of the reality we desired, a reality which would have devoted the whole strength of the nation to the nation's service, and so supplied reinforcements for the army and labour for the army and home industries. In the whole text of the statute the first paragraph alone bears any resemblance to what G.H.Q. had aimed at.

The provisions did not even cover women, although there were many available to replace men at their work and release them for the army.

In spite of everything, I gave the law at first a warm welcome. Friend and foe alike attributed to it, as a sign of our determination, a far higher value than it really possessed. In connection with our successes in Rumania, it was bound to have considerable moral effect.

I followed the course of the discussions in the Reichstag with unmixed regret. This was the first time in the war that I had the opportunity, and also, in my position as First Quartermaster-General, the duty, to do so. G.H.Q. obtained by this means an insight into the state of public opinion that was of decisive importance for the issue of the war. It was certain that the Government was in a very delicate position in dealing with the difficult labour questions. It should have followed a strong war policy, instead of a weak and submissive domestic policy. Why did it not boldly and clearly make the whole people share the responsibility for the result of the war? Certain parties in the Reichstag seemed unable to realize the necessity of postponing

party interests for the general good in the hour of peril. The Government, the Reichstag, and a large part of the nation had never yet understood the character of modern warfare, which demands the devotion of all its resources; nor had they ever realized the importance to ultimate victory of their full co-operation in the fight. The General Staff had again and again to emphasize that the war meant life or death to Germany.

It soon became clear that the Auxiliary Service Law was not merely insufficient, but positively harmful in operation. It was particularly irritating to the troops to find "auxiliary" workers, though employed on the same work and in the same positions, being far better paid than the men who had been called up for service under previous legislation and were now soldiers under military discipline. These grievances were increased by the circumstance that exempted men were paid the same wages as free workmen, that is to say, as the auxiliary workers. This was wholly unjust and unfair. On the lines of communication there were still greater contrasts. Troops withdrawn from the heavy fighting at the Front saw auxiliary workers and women workers working in peace and safety for wages far higher than their own pay. This was bound to embitter the men who had to risk their lives day by day and to endure the greatest hardships, and of necessity increased their dissatisfaction with their pay. The employment of highly-paid auxiliaries on the lines of communications was thus a two-edged sword. There was something fundamentally unsound in such a situation.

The measures introduced in September with a view to employing all our available man-power had thus had but a very scanty result. The latent qualities of the nation had not been properly made available, partly because they were not used at all, partly because they were wasted. Too much was left at home which should have been given to the Army. The efforts of G.H.Q. had failed; the conviction was forced upon us that the German people was no longer sound at heart.

To increase the esteem in which war work and auxiliary service were held, I proposed the institution of the Auxiliary Service Cross. Later on, I was one of the first to receive it, and, having

regard to the tremendous importance I attributed to the satisfaction of G.H.Q.'s demands, wore it as proudly as my other decorations, even if with a certain melancholy. I was thinking of the working of the Auxiliary Service Law, which disappointed me more and more heavily as time went on.

To obtain the necessary skilled workers for the increased production of war material, G.H.Q. had to draw heavily on the army, weakening the fighting forces correspondingly. In the winter of 1916–17 alone, 125,000 men were sent back home, to be returned to the army so soon as they could again be spared. I pressed persistently for arrangements to be made as rapidly as possible between the military and the industrial world for the formation of a body of substitute skilled labour, and for the employment of disabled men and of women in such work. It is true that a great deal was done, but nowhere was the energy shown that our position demanded.

In the end it came to this, that the exempted men formed a privileged class, and it was no longer possible to exercise any control over them.

The increase of our war industries no doubt brought enormous material reinforcement to the army, but it also cost us heavily —in man-power. The longer this situation lasted, and the greater the need of men became owing to the constantly increasing strength of the enemy, the more did G.H.Q. consider itself under a duty to the country, the army, and each individual soldier fighting at the front, to insist on the men at home really working hard. No more men could be withdrawn or withheld from the army. The fall in labour output, which could not be wholly explained by external circumstances, and the strikes, were phenomena which directly impaired the country's fighting capacity in the highest degree. They were a sin against the man at the front, and also, according to the Courts, acts of high treason against the country. Lacking a lead from the Government, infatuated and misled by agitators, a section of the German working class has precipitated their country, their fellows, and themselves, into incalculable misery. It will always be a terrible indictment against them.

The Government should have made especial endeavours to influence the working class by full explanation of the seriousness of our position, and should also not have hesitated to use force if everything else failed.

G.H.Q. knew only too well that in dealing with exemptions there were cases of favouritism, which of necessity had the same embittering effects as the shirking at home. Often and often I begged the Ministry of War to put a stop to this.

It was inevitable that, in our difficult position, we should have to turn our attention to the occupied territories. The Ministry of War had already tackled this question, and the employment of Belgian workmen in Germany had actually begun. G.H.Q. requested the Governor-General to comply with the wishes of the War Ministry and industry generally, and did so all the more earnestly because, at that time, the Government had not even met the army's demands for additional men to the extent of passing the Auxiliary Service Law.

The conscription of workmen for Germany was in the interest of the Belgians themselves, since unemployment had reached a high figure. This conscription, after discussion with the officials in Berlin, was extended. With these extended enlistments, which at first were carried too far, there were cases of hardship, which it would have been better to avoid. They were in the main due to the Belgians themselves, who often denounced their fellow-countrymen, for one reason or another, as out of work, when this was not the case. The Governor-General put a stop to these abuses so soon as he discovered them. In course of time many Belgian workmen emigrated to Germany, without any further complaints being heard. We also conscribed Belgian workmen for work in the occupied regions. In the Belgian refugee Press and in the Entente propaganda, as was to be expected, there was a wild outcry against this procedure. The fact that similar cries were raised in Germany merely reveals a very childish judgment on the war. The military authorities were acting from patriotic duty, and not arbitrarily.

We also obtained labour, though not as much as we might have hoped, from Poland and the other occupied territories,

as well as from those which we acquired later on. We acted everywhere with the greatest consideration, and avoided any appearance of oppressing foreign populations with the air of a high-handed conqueror ; we were much too objective, and such conduct was not in accordance with our views.

Prisoners of war were of the utmost importance in all fields of war activity. We could not have kept our economic structure together without the aid of the enormous numbers of Russians taken in the East. For the same reason, of course, the prisoners taken from us involved not merely an actual diminution of our strength, but also an increase in the labour force available to the enemy. Whenever we took prisoners, it had to be decided whether they were to be employed in the occupied districts or to be sent on into Germany. In this respect, too, the greatest consideration was shown to the authorities at home, even when the army was in the most urgent need of labour.

II

Side by side with the effort to obtain further man-power from the home country went the preparation of the programme for munitions production, for the execution of which a part of the man-power in question was to serve. Our most pressing need was for more guns, ammunition, and machine-guns, and then larger supplies of many other things.

The guns were needed, not only for new armament, but also for changes in the old, to substitute later models for old ones, and also make good the very heavy wastage. In the battles of Verdun and the Somme we suffered heavy losses in guns, not merely through hostile bombardment, but also because they wore out extremely quickly through the higher rate of firing.

Our heavy artillery was well supplied with high-angle howitzers, but the number of long-range weapons was not so satisfactory, and we accelerated their production, as shelling of back areas had proved very harassing to the enemy. It rendered the daily supply to and relief of the troops in the front

line very difficult and in action made the transmission of orders and the movements of reserves a serious problem.

The supply of the heaviest long-range guns was also increased. His Majesty made special efforts to secure that the Navy should give up guns from the vessels that were placed out of commission. The heaviest guns still required railway mountings, and were thus restricted to certain areas. Mechanical transport was more necessary than ever, particularly for bringing up ammunition.

A gun and a howitzer of longer range were being introduced into the field artillery.

It was necessary to decide how many guns were to be produced monthly, in order to cover all requirements. This was a difficult matter. In the case of the heavy artillery our estimate was about correct, but for the field artillery it was too high. When we found that out, we fell below the mark and henceforward there was always a certain vacillation. Industry cannot be transformed in a day, and each change involves time, and a falling-off in production. It was thus necessary to exercise the greatest caution in deciding on any new construction. This was the reason why we were not so insistent on the production of a special infantry gun as we might have been in view of subsequent events.

For defence against tanks the 06 field-gun, which penetrated them, was sufficient; all we had to do was to turn it out in sufficient quantities.

At this time the increased production of ammunition depended on a larger supply of explosives, and this in its turn depended on the possibility of obtaining or producing the necessary elements. Sulphur and nitrogen were particularly important. It was a very difficult task to solve the problem of their supply. We aimed at approximately doubling the previous production. This level was gradually reached, in spite of many obstacles, including serious explosions and shortage of coal. When the explosives programme was carried out, steel began to get scarce. In short, we had one trouble after another, before we succeeded in increasing our munitions production to the desired point.

A matter requiring special attention was the supply of the various sorts of ammunition to the troops. There were too many varieties ; it was nothing less than a work of art for battery commanders to estimate their requirements, and for the Staffs to get the right supplies up to the right place at the right time. The construction of our fuses left something to be desired. The pre-war fuses were not simple enough, and it was essential to get better designs. We had to be very economical with copper and brass, the shortage of which hampered our plans. In spite of the efforts of the Artillery Testing Commission, it was a very long time before we had reliable fuses, which worked in such a way as to burst the shell on immediate contact with the ground. The shell fragments thus spread well and low, instead of being buried. We soon abandoned shrapnel, the training of the troops being insufficient for such delicate work. Shells with sensitive fuses were everywhere preferred.

Gas production, too, had to keep pace with the increased output of ammunition. The discharge of gas from cylinders was used less and less, the troops being opposed to it from first to last, and the use of gas shells increased correspondingly. Our " Yellow Cross " gas shell was greatly feared by the enemy. Our men were still apprehensive of damage from our own gas and it was a long time before things improved in this respect. *Geheimrat* Haber rendered valuable service in connection with the use of gas.

Smoke shells, too, were now manufactured.

The infantry was supplied with a light machine-gun, which might well have been lighter and more simple, for it required too many men. It was necessary to come to a decision, however, for preparations for manufacture had to be made and these took months and months. Each company of infantry was to have four, and later six, of these light guns.

Our older, heavy machine-gun was good, and the men liked it. The artillery was shortly afterwards equipped with this for protection against infantry attacks and for anti-aircraft work.

The supply of armour-piercing bullets to the infantry for use against aircraft and tanks was increased, and the War Ministry

also undertook the production of other rapid-fire weapons for the infantry, as well as of weapons of heavier calibre to deal effectively with tanks.

Great attention had to be given to the production of motor transport. Our horses were getting worse and worse, and remounts came forward slowly. We had to make lorries to replace horse transport, although here, too, we were met with difficulties in the supply of material. We also needed lorries for carrying troops. The enemy, backed by their enormous industries, found it easier and easier, not merely to move their reserves quickly in lorries, but also to use them on an increasing scale for bringing troops up from billets to the line and taking them back again, thus achieving an important economy of physical and moral strength. We had to be content if we could find lorries enough for troop movements in great emergencies.

The time was not yet come for us to undertake the construction of tanks.

Our aircraft industry took a quite special position. The opposing armies were competing to produce the fastest, best-climbing machines. Now one side, now the other would gain the lead, and our industry was often ahead. Especially in 1918 we had some splendid types, to which, next to their own courage, our flying men owed their victories.

Hitherto I have only dealt with some of the more important kinds of war material, of which largely increased supplies were required. But of course everything had to be thought of, for everything was important. Barbed wire, for example, was as urgently required as small arm ammunition. To settle in what proportions the various kinds of material were to be produced, we had to weigh one against another, and consider their relative importance and the probable future requirements. The whole programme was a complicated mental achievement, intended as it was to meet future requirements rather than present necessities. Most of the credit is due to Colonel Bauer, of my staff. It was only definitely settled after several conferences in Berlin, and received the name of the Hindenburg programme, although the programme put forward by G.H.Q. was not confined to the

proposals for increased munitions production, but included demands for more men and moral support.

It was clear that considerable time would be required for the carrying out of the Hindenburg programme; indeed, its very introduction produced a general dislocation which for the moment tended rather to reduce than to increase production. A whole series of inevitable obstacles had to be surmounted. As soon as we could see clearly, we were met with the difficulty that the works which in peace time had been employed in the manufacture of locomotives, and had been transformed for war purposes, had to be given back again for locomotive manufacture. Our rolling stock was now in need of a thorough overhaul. Their munitions work had, of course, to be distributed among other factories, and all plant had to be used to the utmost. The increased output made the extension of factories necessary, and this took time. In other places works had to be abandoned or amalgamated. The whole constituted a far-reaching interference with our industry, and all the more so as we had such leeway to make up.

A good deal of time was bound to elapse before work began on the Hindenburg programme, and still longer before the raw material became war material. The programme itself, too, had to be revised and cut down. As things became clearer, it could be seen that the necessary labour for the whole programme could not be obtained without endangering the supply of men for the Army and Navy. At a later stage the view was expressed that the whole programme had been a mistake and that the G.H.Q. would have been better advised to leave the War Ministry to continue its work as before, merely making its demands on that Ministry. The Field-Marshal and I could, however, only deal with the situation we found, and that was a shortage of supply and equipment for the Army, in spite of the presence of the War Minister at General Headquarters, and of the fact that that shortage was an open secret. Of course it is obvious that instead of this sudden expansion of our war industries it would have been far better to have effected a timely but wholesale transformation of our peace industry into war industry, the former

having been prepared for the change in peace time or during the first two years of the war. G.H.Q., however, had to act in a situation where those ideal conditions were not present.

It is always the same. At first nothing adequate is done; the critics complain, but have no specific details to attack. But as soon as something is done, something constructive brought into being—even if it is really a great piece of organization—the critic has something on which he can really fasten. Often enough he is right. It is easy to be wise after the event. Inaction and neglect are always the worst offences, worse than mistakes of method. The Hindenburg programme did really become a programme, and it achieved more than the other parts of the great scheme, in which we had no say.

We got our industries going at last. The Hindenburg programme was carried through, thanks to the Munitions Production Office created out of the Ordnance Department. This Office was under the control of General Coupette, who was especially concerned with technical and industrial questions; he had the assistance of his two important and resolute Chiefs of Staff, Major Stadtlaender and Colonel Wurtzbacher. The Army knows well what it owes to this Office and the men at its head.

Our industry backed up the fighting forces. It will always have the honour and credit of that. Once it was made clear what demands were to be made on it, it got to work on its task with characteristic energy, and gave ever better and better results. That it ensured to itself a correspondingly high reward from the Government was only reasonable, in view of the great risk and the large capital outlay involved in fulfilling our demands; just as reasonable, in fact, as the workers' right to good wages. I opposed all extravagance and selfishness in the soldiers' interests. It was the duty of the Government to ensure by all necessary measures that our economic position was not made any worse by the enormous demands of the Hindenburg programme. Taxation could only serve as a partial remedy. Profiteering was the deadliest sin, and our inability to eradicate it was a matter of the greatest regret to me from the point of view of *moral* at home and in the field. I made repeated efforts to put a stop to

it. The war profiteer is a repulsive phenomenon, and he and the corruption of his influence have done us incalculable harm.

At the suggestion of G.H.Q. changes had meanwhile been made in the Ministry of War.

A " War Bureau " was established as the central office for the control of the whole of our war industry. In this the Recruiting and Labour departments dealt with all questions of man-power, the Raw Material department with raw materials, and the above-mentioned Munitions Production Office with all questions of manufacture. The hopes I placed in the War Bureau for obtaining all the available man-power were not fulfilled. Even this Office seemed to look at all such questions in the light of domestic politics, instead of putting war necessities first. I had also hoped that it would succeed in bringing employers and workmen into closer relationship. The desire for mutual co-operation existed in many quarters.

The problem of manufacture would have been much simpler if the War Bureau had been given control from the start of our whole war industry, including engineering material, motor transport and aircraft. That was not done, and as a result the problem was never really tackled.

Efforts were also made in the occupied territories and in Poland and Belgium to promote war industries. This was only possible to a limited extent, owing to the fluctuations in the military situation, on which we had to reckon, and the shortage of labour. There were difficulties of other kinds at times. For example, the Belgian workmen in the huge small-arms industries of the Liége district were only willing to work if they received an assurance that the weapons they manufactured should not be used by German troops on the Western Front. This assurance could not be given.

We were thus compelled to remove from many places the machinery which was required by our war industries and transport it to Germany, where good use could be made of it for war purposes.

III

The production and distribution of raw materials in Germany was entrusted to the safe hands of Colonel Koeth, who in his sphere revealed a spirit worthy of this war. He played a large part in the work of getting raw material from the occupied territories. The supply of raw material from neutral and allied countries was assigned to a special department of the Prussian Ministry of War, with which Colonel Koeth co-operated closely. Coal and rolling-stock were outside the scope of his department.

Colonel Koeth gave the army all that it urgently needed, and in view of our position and our dependence on foreign countries, no more could have been done. The supply of raw material was secure for a long time to come. The public, however, suffered severely. Clothing and footwear were very short. Prices ruled terribly high, gravely increasing the cost of living and all the troubles it led to. This caused me anxiety. G.H.Q. could not but be dissatisfied with such a state of affairs in the interests of the efficient conduct of the war, and made many appeals on the point to the Government, unfortunately without success.

Our dependence on foreign countries now came home to roost, and I attached great importance to the production of substitutes. I instructed Lieut.-Colonel Schmidt-Reder to go into this question. He got into touch with the various Government departments and our industries. He is mainly responsible for such success as was achieved. I hope that his work will bring benefit to his country. It may prove an incalculable blessing for the German people, if they learn how to produce at home what they have hitherto imported from abroad.

To produce the various kinds of raw material a large number of war companies were established. I was not in a position to judge whether and to what extent these were necessary, but it is quite clear that their operations gave rise to an extraordinary amount of friction.

The maintenance of the economic life of the country depended

primarily on the question of transport. That, in turn, depended on locomotives, wagons and personnel, and was closely bound up with the coal supply. The Minister, von Breitenbach, gave up a great deal in every direction to satisfy the requirements of the army. The greatest strain was put both on staffs and material, and the locomotives in particular were worn-out. As a first step, matters were improved somewhat by surrendering engineering-shops for the work of locomotive and wagon construction. G.H.Q. helped the Minister of Public Works in other ways, even (although with great reluctance) releasing men on such a scale as to weaken the army. This was unavoidable, however, for it was essential to give some relief to the railway workers. In many directions we had prepared for a short war, and in this and other matters now had to make arrangements to meet a long one. Military demands on the railways at home still remained very extensive. We had taken all the Belgian railway material, and also the engines and rolling-stock we found in North France, but these were not nearly enough. The material taken in Russia could not be used, owing to the difference of gauge.

Our allies also made heavy demands on our engines and rolling-stock. On the Austro-Hungarian railways there were hundreds of German locomotives and about ten thousand German wagons. Bulgaria and Turkey, too, received both personnel and material from us. We had just captured material in Rumania, but on the other hand the enemy had taken several thousand German wagons to Moldavia and kept them there. The occupied districts, with their immense mileage, required an army of railwaymen, and material on a scale to match.

G.H.Q., through the Director of Railways, made a number of suggestions to the Minister with a view to limiting the strain on the railways at home, by cutting down the services, for example. Similar steps were taken in the occupied districts. These measures, which were not and could not be carried out in their entirety then, in view of our economic situation, had to be put into force under compulsion of the oppressive armistice conditions and the Revolution. It may be realized how strained the transport situation was at this time when I state that powder

and explosives factories, on which everything depended, were at a standstill for days on end. There was plenty of coal, but the railways could not bring it to them. Things became so bad that I had to have daily reports on the supplies to the powder factories.

The Director of Railways, Colonel von Oldershausen, and his Chief of Staff, Major von Stockhausen, were personalities and applied themselves to their immense task with the greatest intelligence. They remained throughout in the closest touch with the military railway authorities in the allied countries, and with the transport ministers of the German States. The existence of the various German railway administrations made the problem much more difficult. We were paying the price of failing to secure greater uniformity before the war, and to insist on all the States keeping to the same standards. Bavaria, for example, had considerably fewer heavy locomotives per kilometre than Prussia. A Bavarian engine required quite different spare parts to a Prussian one. A great deal could have been done to improve matters without any alteration of the Imperial constitution.

Transport difficulties were also increased by the fact that there was no unity of control or management of canal and river navigation. Hitherto this had not been developed, though it was urgently necessary. This omission must be made good. A special Inland Water Transport department was established, and at my request the Admiralty assisted us by recruiting the necessary men.

The transport situation, which had been very bad in the winter of 1916–17, improved later. The railways were severely taxed in the winter of 1917–18 but not so badly as in the spring. The Minister of Labour on his side did all he could to improve matters.

Coal and iron are the bases of all war industry. We had both in our country. We were able to improve our position considerably, even in our dealings with the neutrals, by our possession of the Longwy and Briey basins, the Belgian coal-fields, and parts of the coal areas of Northern France and Poland, which latter we managed jointly with Austria-Hungary. We began to mine

coal in North-east Serbia, and tried to get Turkey to make a better use of her deposits. We gave our allies coal, and in return received nothing but Bohemian lignite from Austria-Hungary for Saxony and Bavaria. In return for coal and iron neutral countries gave us, among other things, foodstuffs, gold to improve our exchange, and horses. What a power coal and iron proved themselves to be!

The shortage of coal at home became considerably more acute in the winter of 1916–17; it had a serious effect on *moral*, and called for strong measures. The coal supply in Germany was not properly controlled, and output had fallen very much. As I have already explained, I proposed to the Chancellor in February, 1917, the appointment of a special Coal Controller. *Geheim Bergrat* Stutz was the first to succeed in getting the coal tangle straight, or, at any rate, in overcoming the more formidable obstacles and achieving a fair compromise between the demands for coal for domestic fuel, for light and power, for agriculture and industry, for the railways and the navy. I found it very difficult in May and June, 1917, when we were under the influence of the great Entente offensive in the West and the extraordinary high rate of wastage it involved, to weaken the army further by releasing fifty thousand workmen at his request. This should be remembered when the history of that period is read. G.H.Q. complied in order that we should lay a firm foundation at home for our war on foreign soil. I must emphasize once more the fact that such a weakening of the army laid on G.H.Q. a greater duty than ever to the men in the fighting line, to press insistently for the increase of labour output and the better employment of man-power in Germany. The army never recovered the men thus released, and labour output even fell off considerably. That was, of course, a heavy blow to us.

Iron was not so plentiful as coal. It was difficult to turn out sufficient quantities of steel, especially of hard steel. We obtained large quantities of iron ore from Sweden, and the ores at Poti in Transcaucasia were also of vital importance to us. Scrap, too, was needed for steel production. We removed it from the occupied districts in large quantities. Many a factory

building had to be sacrificed to our war industry, under the pressure of the blockade and the necessities of the war, in order to furnish old iron for the steel of our guns and shells. The output of steel gradually became adequate. Then the steel had to be distributed to the various works—*i.e.*, for guns, ammunition, barbed wire, and, in particular, the quota for the improvement of the railways had to be set apart.

Besides coal, iron and steel, the material required for the production of submarines, motor-transport and aircraft, and lubricants, presented us with some of our gravest problems. For lubricants we had to rely on Austria-Hungary and Rumania. As the former country could not supply enough oil, and every effort adequately to increase her output failed, the Rumanian oil was of decisive importance. But even when we had this source the question of rolling stock remained very serious, and made both the carrying on of the war and life at home very difficult. In 1918 the supplies in the Caucasus promised better times. In our economic condition at that time, our home production of benzol could not be substantially increased. Besides, benzol was not suitable for submarines and aircraft. When, towards the end of the war, we did decide to supply benzol for our aircraft, this was done solely on account of the shortage of petrol, and in the knowledge that we were thereby reducing the fighting capacity of our airmen, and increasing the dangers to which they were exposed. Stocks, like the rate of wastage in the Army, required constant watching. The use of cars had to be limited more than ever, and even that of motor-lorries in quiet periods, in order to be able to make full use of them at critical moments. I could not put the Army's demands any higher.

The shortage of oil at home was serious. The country districts did not obtain sufficient for the winter. The peasants had to pass the long winter evenings in the dark, which was very bad for their *moral*. It is characteristic of Germany that little was ever said about this great inconvenience. For a time some of our transport difficulties were due to the bad lubricants used on the locomotives. They froze very easily. Private cars were

practically not used at all in Germany. The whole rolling-stock situation was one of the greatest anxiety, and called for incessant attention. It was not until the autumn of 1918 that I achieved my desire that the supplies for the army and the navy should be under a single control. The supply of transport material for the army and the home-country was already under a single authority—the Director of Mechanical Transport.

G.H.Q. constantly urged the importance of developing all processes for the production of substitutes, but many inevitable natural difficulties stood in the way.

The raw materials for trench warfare, timber and rubble, were drawn on an increasing scale from the occupied territories, but Germany, too, had to send large quantities.

As far as raw material was concerned I could not deal with more than broad, general questions. But even these demanded a thorough study, and I had to keep myself constantly *au courant* if I was to decide rightly in many difficult problems.

In such a war it was inevitable that the occupied territories would have to supply raw materials. Our strong organization gradually achieved a great deal in this direction. G.H.Q. asked the Governors-General in Poland and Belgium to work for the same end. In all essentials, the same methods were followed universally. It is obvious that this involved hardship for the local population, but equally obvious that these measures had to be taken.

Every intelligent person will admit that in many cases we might have acted in some more practical fashion. The task before the authorities, collectively and individually, was, however, at once novel and peculiarly difficult to carry out owing to the changing requirements of the long war. In spite of our extreme need, we acted with a consideration that was carried almost too far, when compared with the extreme measures taken at home. Germany had to surrender her church bells, but, at the suggestion of Chancellor von Hertling to His Majesty, Belgium was allowed to retain hers.

The occupied territories were of decisive help to us, both at the front and at home. The exploitation of their resources absorbed

large numbers of men, just as our war industries at home did, but we had to make this sacrifice to live.

Our allies were induced by the Ministry of War to take their part in supplying Germany with raw materials, mainly for the manufacture of, or else in payment for, the munitions supplied to them by us. The ministry also managed the copper mines at Bor in north-eastern Serbia, which were extraordinarily useful. G.H.Q. were only called in to help when Turkey or Bulgaria, true to old Balkan traditions, were behindhand in delivery of materials, and required some stimulus to make them fulfil their undertakings.

In the problem of supplying raw material for the army German scientists put their immense knowledge at our service. Thanks be to German science!

In all questions relating to the increase of our home resources I received magnificent support from Colonel Bauer and Major von Harbou. Their work was typical.

IV

For the nation and the army, man and beast, the question of food supplies was of equal importance.

The work of the army in the field depended to a high degree on their rations. That, next to leave, has the most decisive effect on the *moral* of the troops. I thus had to give the food question my serious attention.

The waning *moral* at home was intimately connected with the food situation. In the daily food the human body did not receive the necessary nourishment, especially albumen and fats, for the maintenance of physical and mental vigour. In wide quarters a certain decay of bodily and mental powers of resistance was noticeable, resulting in an unmanly and hysterical state of mind which under the spell of enemy propaganda encouraged the pacifist leanings of many Germans. In the summer of 1917 my first glimpse of this situation gave me a great shock. This state of mind was a tremendous element of weakness. It was

all a question of human nature. It could be eliminated to some extent by strong patriotic feeling, but in the long run could only be finally overcome by better nourishment. More food was needed. We had to find new sources of supply, conserve our own stocks, and, above all, increase our own production. The last was the most important.

The recent occupation of Wallachia was of decisive importance. Other measures were needed, however. The necessity of using straw and wood for fodder, and perhaps even for human food, was constantly insisted on by G.H.Q., as was the employment of leaf-hay for fodder. Just as we had to get every ounce of strength out of the people to carry on the war, so, with the help of our scientists, we had to make Nature yield up everything that could be used for, and turned into, food for man and beast.

The necessity for preserving foodstuffs from decaying and going to waste led, among other things, to potato drying, in which I took a great interest.

To increase agricultural production supplies of artificial manures in sufficient quantities and at reasonable prices were essential.

G.H.Q. took every step to secure these supplies, which were all the more important, as natural manure became more scarce owing to the diminution of our cattle stocks and the shortage of straw, not to mention the progress of intensive cultivation. We obtained the necessary phosphates from the occupied territories of Northern France and Belgium, and were constantly impressing on the Chancellor and the Treasury the necessity of extending the establishments at Merseburg for getting nitrogen from the air.

The question of prices was a matter for the home authorities. It suffered from political considerations. In view of the prevalent socialist agitation against the Land and the Agrarians, who were "raising the price of bread against the poor," and taking into consideration the already serious living conditions, the Government lacked the courage to fix maximum prices which would be suitable in the long run. Agriculture, suffering from very high cost of production, and faced with the necessity of having stocks for after the war, was often quite incapable of working

profitably on the basis of the prices fixed. Supplies were short for the population, and the low prices meant that they were not all brought to market. The non-expert bodies, whose duty it was to see that all stocks were delivered, were not in a position to perform it. Their actions led to a good deal of irritation and discontent. The individual did not even receive his official ration, which itself was fixed too low to maintain his full strength. As a result, both town and country set about to help themselves as far as they could. Illicit trading and hoarding increased. Before long there was no end to the process.

Producers kept all they needed themselves, and more, and even if this was a trifle compared to the total stocks available, their conduct was bound to cause discontent.

The masses, especially the middle classes, including officials and officers with fixed salaries, suffered real hardship. A few, no doubt, gave way to temptation in the difficult times and helped themselves, but the majority were literally starved. This was an additional burden to the already overburdened middle classes, yet, kicked by everyone and suffering in silence, they did duty to the very end.

The workmen got better treatment. They adjusted their demands for increased wages, which they supported with strikes, to the illicit trading prices. True, a large part of the working class also suffered hardship, but, in contrast to the middle classes, they generally had enough to live on.

The question of illicit trading became of the greatest importance in domestic politics. It increased with the length of the war. As people at home lost interest in the war, their natural instincts, which now had nothing to curb them, were given free rein. Illicit trading and hoarding took more and more disgusting forms, and these and the declining *moral* interacted on one another with increasingly disastrous results. Our system of compulsory production combined with maximum prices had failed. Production did not increase, and yield was falling off, hampered as it was by other influences such as shortage of labour, lack of manure and bad weather. The many suggestions which G.H.Q. made to the Chancellor for combating illicit trading, extravagant middle-

men's profits and high wages, which had to be put an end to if we were to maintain our capacity to fight, met with no response.

The whole thing was a farce. The fear lest the maximum prices for agricultural produce should be fixed too high actually contributed greatly towards increasing the cost of living and widening the gulf between town and country. The discontented elements knew how to make capital out of all these things. Our enemies' starvation blockade triumphed, and caused us both physical and spiritual distress.

My personal view of the system of compulsory production at home was that the sooner it was abolished (and in the case of certain articles of food it should be abolished at once), and free trading again permitted, the better it would be for everyone. On the other hand, I thought that a wide development of co-operative societies and unions of producers, as auxiliaries of the Government, was urgently required. Unfortunately there were not yet enough of these anywhere. Above all it was important that the prices for individual products should be raised, and fixed early enough to enable farmers to make their arrangements accordingly. The Intendant-General, who shared my views, put them energetically before the War Food Office. It would seem that England, with her system of minimum prices, chose the better part, for her production certainly increased enormously.

The farmers worked well. The great landed estates, in particular, achieved wonders. The country has again been able to see that, just as the army is the basis of order, so our agriculture is the foundation of our economic, indeed, even of our political, life. If we had only borne this in mind before the war things would have been much easier for us. To-day it is the first duty of the state to make good what was then neglected, and that of our agriculture to promote intensive cultivation.

I had many intimate discussions with both presidents of our War Food Office, von Batocki and von Waldow. Different as they were, they both displayed stern devotion to duty and deep love of the Fatherland.

The army often helped the homeland. In view of the heavy

burden laid on the troops, they were no better off than the men at home. I acted throughout on the deep conviction that the army and the people were in all respects one. G.H.Q., indeed, always worked for that end. In Berlin people seemed at times to have the idea that the army and the people were two different bodies, with different stomachs. This view was a melancholy proof how little the war was understood at home. It was with a heavy heart that G.H.Q. had often temporarily to reduce the rations of meat, bread, potatoes and fats, and also of oats and hay. This was done to help the people at home and keep up the war spirit. The War Food Office, however, thoroughly understood the army's needs, and especially the fact that the men in the front line were deserving of the greatest consideration.

The men usually did not have enough, even when they received the full ration. Besides, the food was too monotonous. I heard many complaints from the Army Commanders on this point, but I could not help in individual cases. At home, the depot troops did not get enough to eat, and this gave rise to a lot of trouble.

Luxuries became rarer and rarer.

Horses suffered particularly heavily, their rations being wholly insufficient. Their hard fodder ration was too small, and great difficulties were experienced with the supplies of coarse fodder.

The commissariat department had, at the beginning of the war, to combat many difficulties due to their peace organization, and had insufficient *personnel.* At a later stage they were fully equal to their responsible work. Their devoted and self-sacrificing work was of great service both to the Command and to the men.

The department concerned at G.H.Q. always co-operated well with the Director of the Administration Department of the Ministry of War, General von Oven, who fought with me at Liége, and with the War Food Office. There was mutual give and take. The sins of omission of the pre-war period, however —our failure to prepare our agriculture for war and consequent

lack of any great reserve when it began—could not be made good.

We helped the home country in their supply problems with motor lorries, by requisitioning vans, and by undertaking distribution from the stations of the large towns. We had to put up with the difficulties in which these measures involved the army. Harvest leave was given far more freely than normally. The potato supply at home was helped by releasing rolling stock.

The occupied territories helped us with food supplies. The L. of C. inspectorates drew on them, in particular, for meat and saw to it that their agriculture was carried on on the best lines. Wherever troops were stationed for any length of time, they themselves worked hard both in cultivation and harvesting; but frequent changes prevented us from deriving much benefit from this. In the year 1917 only Rumania enabled Germany, Austria-Hungary and Constantinople to keep their heads above water.

The measures taken by the Entente relieved us of anxiety as to the feeding of Belgium.

We obtained substantial supplies from neutral countries, especially Denmark, Holland and Switzerland. In our purchases we acted through a special German organization, and did not deal, like the Entente, with the inhabitants of the different countries, allowing them to make a profit. Rightly or wrongly, this aroused considerable indignation and resentment among our Allies and the neutrals, and ultimately also at home.

The food situation in Austria-Hungary was always exceedingly strained. Hungary had enough. She did, it is true, undertake the supply of a very considerable part of the Austro-Hungarian Army, but she gave no assistance to starving Austria. In the latter country, the Czech cultivators refused to supply the poorer districts inhabited by Germans. The clumsy Austrian system of administration created additional difficulties, so that, in spite of orders of Draconian severity, there was never any real hope of procuring the necessary supplies or of distributing them fairly. I shall never forget the way in which a high Austrian official begged me to help him against Hungary in this question of

supplies. The army largely starved, as did German Austria, and especially Vienna.

Although agriculture was very primitive, the situation in Bulgaria was better, but the system of government was rotten. Arrangements on the L. of C. were bad, and the supply system was managed on antiquated lines. The army often ran short of food. There was ground for hope, however, that Bulgaria would be self-supporting in the long run.

The Turkish supply system was rotten through and through. Her agriculture was the most primitive imaginable, even iron ploughs being unknown. Our Minister of Agriculture, Baron von Schorlemer, had made efforts to improve Turkish agriculture, but the Turkish Government displayed not the least understanding or perception in the matter. They asked for motor ploughs to bring more land under cultivation, but never dreamt of really tackling the whole problem and taking definite steps to increase production. Turkey, especially Constantinople, was thus in urgent need of help.

In the autumn of 1916 the idea was mooted of establishing a Central Supply Office for the Quadruple Alliance, under German control. It was a specious suggestion, but the food situation in the four countries depended on circumstances that were fundamentally different. Equality could never have been established. In the end, they would all have lived on Germany. The idea was abandoned, quite rightly.

V

The great importance of Rumania, or more correctly of Wallachia, has already been noticed in various connections. We had now the task of exploiting this country for what we needed, and of transporting it to the consumers. Rumania and the Dobrudja were put under one administration. Having regard to the predominant part which we Germans had taken in the conquest of the country, I endeavoured to have this administration put in German hands. In view of the peculiarities of our

Allies and their business methods, this certainly offered the best guarantee of due consideration being paid to our economic claims and interests, and our Allies agreed to the course proposed.

A definite settlement of the Bulgarians in the whole of the Dobrudja was not in our interests. That portion which was originally Bulgarian, having only been ceded to Rumania after the second Balkan war, was immediately administered by them, in accordance with the treaty of the autumn of 1915. That question was thus settled for the time being. As things were then, handing over the rest of the Dobrudja, including the line from Cernavoda to Constanza, would have been equivalent to giving Bulgaria the third and last trade route from Central Europe to Turkey, though she already controlled the routes via Salonika and Sofia. This monopoly would be bound to have a bad effect on our trade with Turkey. The selfish attitude of Austria-Hungary was already quite enough for Turkey to bear. In the Dobrudja the interests of Germany were identical with those of Turkey and Austria. Nevertheless, in all Bulgarian questions, Vienna adopted a very ambiguous attitude towards us. It was thus uncertain what line would be taken at the Austrian Headquarters My views to a certain extent ran counter to Bulgaria's interests. All the same, I had the satisfaction of seeing all the Allies agree to the establishment of a German L. of C. administration in the Dobrudja. This was placed under the Headquarters Staff of General von Mackensen's Army Group, and comprised the region from the southern frontier of the former Rumanian Dobrudja to a line some twenty kilometres north of the Cernavoda-Constanza line. The rest of the Dobrudja comprised the operations zone of the 3rd Bulgarian Army and was thus under Bulgarian administration.

The Bulgarians soon gave considerable trouble to the German authorities in the Dobrudja and their head General Kurt von Unger. The matter was even brought to the notice of G.H.Q I stood firm against the Bulgarian demand to administer the L. of C. area, and was firmly supported by the attitude of the German officials who fought with spirit against the selfish behaviour of our Allies. The administration of the district was

bound to suffer from this friction, but General von Unger and his German L. of C. commandants took care that the rich oil supplies at Constanza and other raw materials were exported from the L. of C. area, and were thus put to the use that really benefited the interests of ourselves and our Allies. The land was cultivated as well as was possible in the difficult circumstances. If the Bulgarian Army did not receive the supplies from the Dobrudja that it could have yielded, the fault lay solely with the attitude adopted by them and their Government.

The population in the L. of C. area enjoyed our protection almost to the end of the war. The question of the permanent restoration of the southern portion to Bulgaria was dropped, owing to the Peace of Bucharest.

We had reserved the right to buy raw material in the operations zone of the 3rd Bulgarian Army. The Bulgarians felt themselves aggrieved by this, and put many difficulties in our way.

The administration set up in Wallachia contained a strong Austro-Hungarian element. This arrangement was of course far from satisfactory. We had, however, to put up with this on the simple ground that Germany had not the men to do everything herself. In many cases the Austro-Hungarian officials made our life a burden; they feared an increase of German influence in Rumania, and sought to obtain for themselves advantages of every description. Bulgaria, too, made the administration more difficult, acting at first in a most arbitrary and despotic manner. Turkey was loyal.

The administration was called "military." It was under Field-Marshal von Mackensen, and thus also under G.H.Q., and not directly responsible to His Majesty, as were the Governors-General. The Foreign Office was kept out of it. The Military Governor was General Tülff von Tschepe und Weidenbach, who had for some time at the beginning of 1915 administered the occupied parts of Poland, so far as they were not in the operations zone. His Chief of Staff was at first General von Bergmann, and later Col. Hentsch, who had been Mackensen's Deputy Chief of

Staff during the Rumanian campaign and had a fine grasp of administrative and economic problems.

Under the Military Governors were German and Austrian L. of C. commandants.

The Military Government did not include the whole of Wallachia, a narrow strip remaining part of the L. of C. and Operations zone of the 9th and the Danube Armies. The whole area was, however, administered on the same principles.

The Rumanian officials and judges had for the most part remained at their posts, and those that had fled could be replaced by other Rumanians. The administrative problems were thus simpler than those that had previously confronted the C.-in-C. in the East, being mainly economic. These were, of course, of the utmost importance. The appointments to the Military Governor's staff and the selection of L. of C. commandants were made with an eye to this situation.

There were highly satisfactory supplies of agricultural produce of all sorts, especially wheat and maize, and also of peas, beans, plums, eggs and wine. The autumn sowing was undertaken at once. Everything was done to encourage production. The sowing of winter wheat was most important, as we had to rely on the Rumanian harvest for the critical period before the Hungarian harvest in July and our own in August. Vegetables also were of importance to us, and vegetable-growing was made as profitable as possible. The stocks of cattle had been greatly reduced by the war, and those that remained were now used for draught purposes. The export of meat was thus confined within very moderate limits.

In getting agricultural produce from Rumania, the Military Administration worked with the officials of the Central Purchasing Company which had been active in Rumania before that country entered the war. Its independent attitude did not, however, meet with approval.

The stocks of oil we found in Rumania were not large. The boring plant had been absolutely destroyed, and the wells very cleverly blocked up. The English Colonel Thomsen had admirably fulfilled his duty of making it difficult for us to use the oil-fields.

His work was not, it is true, of decisive value to the Entente, but it did materially reduce the oil supplies of our army and the home country. We must attribute our shortage in part to him. The Military Administration brought in men acquainted with the Rumanian oil industry and applied itself energetically to its second most important task, of restoring the oil production by clearing blocked wells, making new borings, and re-establishing the refineries and getting them going again. The output increased, though very slowly.

To many people in Vienna, influenced by their privations and not well-disposed towards us, it seemed that we were not getting on quickly enough with the gathering of the harvest and the resumption of oil working, and in February 1917, complaints came from Vienna and were repeated to me from Berlin. I had my doubts for a time whether the work was really being well done. However, I was able to judge of the difficulties to be overcome in Rumania from my own experiences in Kovno, and I did not let myself be misled. By April the complaints had ceased, and the Administration was generally approved.

The distribution of the supplies from the Dobrudja and Wallachia was carried out in accordance with special agreements among the Allies. There was no great difficulty in settling on a basis for the distribution of the oil, but the sharing of the agricultural products of Wallachia was one of the most thankless tasks of the Quartermaster-General, General Hahndorff, whose frank, thoughtful ways and wide understanding of war economics made him particularly suited for the task. Bulgaria had no interest in the distribution of the Rumanian supplies, as she was receiving the Dobrudja harvest. Turkey received only a small quantity, having been allotted advances from the large stocks lying in the Dobrudja. It was thus a question of an understanding between Germany and Austria-Hungary, or, more correctly, Austria alone. The Austrian negotiators made huge demands; we took a leaf from their book and made equally large claims. After a furious discussion, the happy medium proved once more the best way to agreement, and ultimate satisfaction on both sides. Of course, representatives of our War Food Office were brought into

the negotiations, and the general lines of our case were settled in advance in discussion with them. Only in unusually critical cases was G.H.Q. called on to decide.

For the transport of oil, corn, etc., it proved possible, generally speaking, to re-open the routes which had been used for export from Wallachia before Rumania entered the war. For this purpose the Rumanian railways were restored, which took a certain time. The Danube navigation was reopened at once. Austria-Hungary regarded the Danube as her exclusive province, but Colonel von Oldershausen kept our interests to the fore. The German Danube Shipping Company, the Bavarian Lloyd, found further scope for its activities.

Our transport arrangements always fulfilled the demands made on them. The anticipated increase in oil exports was prepared for in advance by increasing the construction of tank wagons and tank ships. We started to lay a pipe line from Ploesti to Giurgiu ; it had not been completed when peace came.

Just as previously in the district administered by the C.-in-C. in the East, so here in Rumania the officials of the Military Administration and all others concerned in the government of Wallachia were fully conscious, not only of the vital importance of their work for the prosecution of the war, but also, as we all hoped, of its value to the country when peace came.

VI

The German people, both at home and at the front, have suffered and endured inconceivable hardships in the four long years of war. The war has undermined and disintegrated patriotic feeling and the whole national *moral.*

The strangling hunger-blockade and the enemy propaganda, which went hand in hand in the fight against the German race and the German spirit, were a heavy burden—a burden that grew ever heavier as the war lasted. The blockade worked successfully. Propaganda had found fruitful soil at home. It now turned its attention directly to the man at the front, who

by this time was ready to give it a hearing. Blockade and propaganda began gradually to undermine our moral resolution and shake the belief in ultimate victory. The very natural longing for peace began to assume forms that bordered on weakness, led to divisions among the people and lowered the *moral* of the army.

Poisonous weeds grew on this soil. All German sentiment, all patriotism, died in many breasts. Self came first. War profiteers of every kind, not excluding the political variety, who took advantage of the country's danger and the Government's weakness to snatch political and personal advantages, became more and more numerous. Our moral resolution suffered untold harm. We lost confidence in ourselves.

The idea of revolution, preached by enemy propaganda and Bolshevism, found the Germans in a receptive frame of mind, and gained ground in the army and navy through the Independent Socialists. Pernicious doctrines spread among the masses. The German people, at home and the front, had received its death-blow.

When I was appointed First Quartermaster-General, Germany was just at the beginning of this development. Its nature and its future course could not be grasped. One thing, however, was absolutely certain, that we could not watch it idly and do nothing.

Something had now been done to lighten the burden of the blockade; we had broken through it in Rumania. Nobody knew whether we would ever have another chance, or how we should use it.

We were hypnotized by the enemy propaganda as a rabbit is by a snake. It was exceptionally clever and conceived on a great scale. It worked by strong mass-suggestion, kept in the closest touch with the military situation, and was unscrupulous as to the means it used.

The German people, who had not yet learnt the art or the value of silence, had, with their mistaken frankness, shown the enemy propaganda in their speech, writings and actions, the best line of attack.

The German people had themselves coined the phrase, " Prus-

sian militarism," although this very "Prussian militarism," the spirit of unselfish loyalty, of the surrender of the individual to the conception of the State, had created Prussia and guaranteed Germany's brilliant development. People mistook externals for the substance of militarism, and failed to realize the national strength that issued from it. It should not have been resisted, but encouraged. Even high officials of the Government used the word reproachfully to me during the war, so that one can hardly blame the many who thought they were acting wisely in turning against "militarism," even though they could not say exactly what it meant. True, many of them knew perfectly well what they were after in this struggle. Authority was at stake!

The Entente knew all about the strength of "Prussian militarism." They knew why they fought against it. They knew, too, what they were doing when they stirred up an agitation in Germany against the Corps of Officers, in the last resort the pillars of authority. They were on sure ground when they worked against Prussia in South Germany, attacked the Emperor, the symbol of our Imperial unity, railed against the Crown Prince, and promised our people the riches of Heaven as soon as they had got rid of the Imperial house and the other dynasties.

Later on the enemy propaganda began to take interest in me, too. The army and the people were to be filled with doubts about the General Staff, the belief in ultimate victory was to be shattered, and faith in the man who strove to oppose a strong resistance to the Entente's ambitions was to be destroyed.

By working on our democratic sentiments the enemy propaganda succeeded in bringing our form of government, as being autocratic, into discredit in Germany and throughout the world, although our Emperor had not the same power as the President of the United States, and although the franchise for the Reichstag, the supreme representative body in the Empire, rested on a more democratic basis than that of many other countries.

The enemy propaganda aimed ever more directly at breaking up the unity of the German Empire and at separating Germany

from her ruling house, and her dynasties and governments from their people; this was revolution pure and simple.

The propagandists were clever in realizing the effects that such phrases as "peace of understanding," "disarmament after the war," "League of Nations," and so on would have on the German people in view of their unpolitical and unmilitary mentality and the great privations they were suffering. They were only too ready to follow, in conscious or unconscious self-delusion, these alluring but deceptive visions.

In this connection, the propagandists' story that the peace of the world had been disturbed by German plans of world dominion, fell on only too fruitful soil.

In plain fact, the German Government in the post-Bismarck period had had no great foreign-political aim whatever beyond the maintenance of peace, save, perhaps, that it aimed at increasing the colonial possessions of the country. It scarcely thought of world politics. It went to Bagdad without clearly knowing why. Living as we have done since 1870–71 a life of constant preference for the apparent over the real, of judging by externals, we have overestimated our own strength, and underestimated the forces that were working against us. We spread all over the world, without having a firm footing in Europe. After gaining Alsace-Lorraine and establishing the Empire, the German people were satisfied. To increase our colonial possessions, and advance our position in the world by extending our markets, had become a necessity for us. This could only be done by force. Our people, on the other hand, aimed at an equal place in peaceful competition. Preoccupied with business and political speculation, they did not know that other peoples would find it difficult to distinguish this peaceful aim from the desire for world mastery.

The maintenance of peace was a great object. Just as we could only win a war of defence by attacking, so we could only keep peace by pursuing a clear, strong policy, on well-defined principles. German foreign policy did not have that character. It showed itself to be capricious and inconsiderate. The peoples who were ill-disposed to us took advantage of this to combine against us; even those who had hitherto been opposed to one

another combined against us. In other ways we showed ourselves uncertain and irresolute. That, too, brought us no friends.

Many Germans were very anxious, and voiced their fears unmistakably in all directions. Unlike their Government, they had far-seeing ideas. These utterances were, however, merely those of private persons, and meant no more to us than they would in any other country. The war made no change in this situation. The war aims of the Governments and peoples of the Entente were always far more ambitious than the dreams of individual Germans. We know this now to our cost.

Plans for world dominion demand a strong national feeling. This, in spite of the foundation of the Empire in 1871, we have never achieved. Our Government did nothing to cultivate it in the post-Bismarck period. On the contrary, we lost it in proportion as we lost our strength of will. In our political thought we have remained too " federal " and too divided in questions of domestic politics. We came into the world too soon, without any national sentiment, and in our sense of world-citizenship, born of foreign influences, we have never found the true level between thinking nationally and thinking internationally, between our domestic and our world interests.

No dreams of world mastery, no " Nationalism " of the German Government, endangered peace before 1914, or have prevented its conclusion during the war, whatever enemy propaganda might say. After all, propaganda did not set out to tell the truth, but merely to break down the determination and fighting spirit of the German people, and to spread views that would serve its own ends.

At last came the catchword of the national " right of self-determination." A problem apparently based on a most acceptable truism, but actually only to be solved by force where, as is so often the case, nationalities are mixed. The phrase fitted the case of Austria-Hungary better than it fitted us, but it also had its effect on Germany, and in the long run, interpreted by fear and hatred, it was destined to deal us our death-blow through the construction put upon it by Germans.

In the last stages of the war, and quite openly from the begin-

ning of 1918 onwards, propaganda worked ever more clearly for the social revolution, side by side with the political revolution. The war was painted as being waged by the upper ten thousand at the expense of the workers, and the victory of Germany as the workers' misfortune.

The enemy propaganda and Bolshevism, which aimed at a world revolution, were working for the same ends in Germany. England gave China opium ; our enemies gave us the revolution, and we accepted the poison and distributed it as the Chinese distribute opium.

While Entente propaganda was doing ever more harm to the German people and the army and navy, it succeeded in maintaining the determination to fight in its own countries and armies, and in working against us in neutral countries.

Responsibility for the war, the Belgian atrocities, the ill-treatment of prisoners, our political immorality and treachery, our mendacity and brutality, despotism in Prussia, the enslavement of the German people, all these reproaches, cleverly invented for the benefit of the campaign of lies against us, had the greatest effect all over the world. Side by side with these were the catchwords of the fight for democracy against militarism, autocracy and the Junker, of the war for civilization and for the freedom of the smaller nations, and other phrases of the sort, idealized and of infinite effect on men who do not see too clearly. The public opinion of the world was mesmerized by them. For the American soldiers the war became, as it were, a crusade against us.

In the neutral countries we were subjected to a sort of moral blockade. The way to the soul of the neutrals was barred to us. We did not know how to open it. We alone did wrong ; everything that the Entente did was morally right and the obvious course to follow. Germany was the world-oppressor, and the policy of the Entente, and that alone, was pursuing true moral aims, at once freeing the world and making it happier. In neutral countries, which now must know the truth, we lost all credit, while that of the enemy rose immeasurably. We had our friends, it is true, but they had no influence.

Similar work was done in the countries allied to us. The object was to separate us from our allies.

Propaganda was an old and powerful weapon in England's hands. The East India Company had striking success with it in the conquest of India. It had started a tradition in England. England was the only country that long ago had employed this weapon of politics and war with a clear vision and on a really large scale, in the service of its national world-encircling policy.

" To threaten foreign countries with the aid of revolution has for many years been the policy of England," said Bismarck sixty years ago. He was thinking of the speech of Canning on the 12th of December, 1826, in which that Prime Minister threatened in a public sitting of the House of Commons that England controlled the " winds of Æolus," and could at any time unchain the powers of revolution. " If we," he said, " take part in a war, we shall see gathered under our standards all the restless and dissatisfied (whether with or without a cause) of any country with which we are in conflict."*

Even before the war close observers had clearly recognized the propagandist activities of our present enemies. They were then already working systematically against us. It was mainly their propaganda that England and France had to thank for the success of their policy of undermining our position in the world. The disarmament proposals of the Tsar were their handiwork, and well adapted to the undiscriminating credulity of many circles in Germany. The wide distribution of Bernhardi's book in the English world was also part of the same work. It would have been better if it had never been written. We were to be cut off from the world by Reuter. Our political leaders

* *Note.*—" Wenn wir uns an einem Kriege beteiligen, werden wir unter unseren Fahnen versammelt sehen alle Unruhigen, alle Unzufriedenen, sei es mit oder ohne Ursache, eines jeden Landes, mit dem wir in Unfrieden stehen werden."

In the official report, however, the passage reads as follows:

" But I much fear that this country (however earnestly she may endeavour to avoid it) could not, in such case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come into conflict." [*Tr.*]

apparently failed to observe the influence of the present Entente countries on the Press of the world, although their attention was drawn to it often enough. They also did not see the influence of the little centres of French culture on public opinion in the capitals of neutral countries.

Even the Masonic lodges of the world, as had long been planned by England, worked with the whole mysterious strength of this most powerful of all secret societies in the service of Anglo-Saxon, and thus, to us, of international politics. Only the national lodges in Prussia remained free from this influence.

All over the enemy countries strong propaganda organizations had been established under the guidance of experienced statesmen and politicians. Under a single leadership they worked everywhere and with united strength, on clear and simple lines, and with ample funds. They had branches in neutral countries, where they achieved their aims with that utter lack of conscience which is so characteristic of the Entente. Special organizations dealt with the encouragement of national aspirations, particularly in Poland and among the Letts, and no doubt also among the peoples of the Dual Monarchy, especially the Czechs and Southern Slavs.

While on the field of battle we held the initiative almost to the very end, the enemy carried on the psychological war compaign from the start with a united front, attacking along the whole line, and finding auxiliaries in the many deserters in the neutral states, and also, alas! support in Germany.

In England the whole propaganda service was placed under Lord Beaverbrook, with three directors, of whom Lord Northcliffe attended to the enemy countries, Kipling to home and colonial propaganda, and Lord Rothermere to the work in neutral countries. While England preferred to work principally in economic and political propaganda, military and intellectual questions were the special province of France. This is typical of the reasoning of our enemies. America, which at first assisted only financially (undertaking fifty per cent. of the whole propaganda expenses of the Entente), later took an active part in the work.

Italy, Belgium, and the other Allies, generously aided by American money, were also active in propaganda.

The express aim of the American and English propaganda became more and more the achievement of an internal revolution in Germany.

Lloyd George knew what he was saying when, at the end of the war, he expressed to Lord Northcliffe the thanks of England for the work he had done. He had proved himself a master in " mass suggestion."

We found ourselves, bit by bit, attacked by enemy propaganda, in speech and writing, through the neutral countries, especially across our land frontiers, from Holland and Switzerland, through Austria-Hungary and even our own country, and, finally, from the air, with such cleverness and on such a large scale that many people could no longer distinguish between enemy propaganda and their own sentiments. Propaganda was all the more effective against us when we had to carry on the war, not with strong battalions, but with good ones. The value of numbers in war cannot be denied, and without soldiers there can be no fighting. But numbers alone are nothing without the spirit that animates them; this is true both at home and in the field. We have fought the world, and we could fight the world with a good conscience so long as our *moral* was high. While our will to conquer remained unshaken we had every prospect of victory and, what was just as important, need not bow to the enemy's lust for our destruction. When our *moral* failed, the whole position was changed. We no longer fought to the last drop of blood. Many Germans were no longer ready to die for their country.

The collapse of our *moral* at home, with its effect on our fighting capacity, the campaign against the home front and the spirit of the Army, were, undoubtedly, the chief means whereby the Entente hoped to conquer us, after they had given up hope of a military victory. I had no doubt about that.

In the spring of 1918 a sagacious Entente politician spoke as follows:

" In London and Paris there is to-day a general and funda-

mental belief among the leading statesmen of the Entente that the German Army on the Western Front can never be conquered by purely military means. But it is, none the less, clear that the Entente will win, owing to the internal conditions in Germany and the Central Powers, which will lead to the fall of the Imperial house. In the autumn of this year at latest revolution will break out in Germany. It is quite clear to us that there are influential circles in Germany for whom nothing could be worse than a military victory of Ludendorff."

This bore out the words of Spröbel, a member of the Prussian Diet, and editor of *Vorwärts*, in 1915 :

" I confess quite openly that a complete victory of the Empire would not be in the interests of Social Democracy."

I am reluctant to write these lines and let them go out to the world. But truth is truth, and these words were spoken.

VII

The Imperial Chancellor was responsible for the maintenance of our *moral*. G.H.Q. would gladly have undertaken the work of educating public opinion, but in accordance with their duty they invariably appealed to the Imperial Chancellor and asked his intervention.

It lay with him to remove the, unfortunately, natural discontent of the people, and to proceed against the excesses and extravagances in our war industries. These and other sinister manifestations were bound to cause discontent, and so weaken the *moral* of all classes as to do irreparable harm to our fighting capacity. Profiteering, pleasure seeking, the thought of self, crowded out all noble aspirations, and privations made men callous. The men in the trenches could not help fearing that others would take their jobs and rob them of their livelihood. It is with deep emotion that one looks back and sees how the German sense of truth and honesty, spotless personal purity and devotion to the Fatherland gave place to something else, something quite foreign to Germans—love of self, which became the

highest law. The Imperial Chancellor should have shown the people whither they were steering, and put the enormous gravity of the situation plainly before them. The Government should have kept the people constantly informed of the true state of affairs, which was that only from a beaten enemy could we obtain a tolerable peace, and that otherwise we must submit to a peace of force. Victory only could give us the one and preserve us from the other.

Our political and mental immaturity, our want of judgment that prevented us from realizing the hollowness of catchwords and impossible promises, was, and is, our undoing. I had always hoped the German people would see through phrases, catchwords and political lies to an appreciation of the situation which corresponded to hard facts. I was mistaken. Phrases, catchwords and criminal misrepresentations had more and more influence as political feeling ran higher, and the gulf between the classes and between town and country widened. Party politics and their aims became more important than Germany herself. The great mass of the *bourgeoisie*, torn all ways, sure that they always knew better than anyone else and entirely without discipline, went on their way. Afraid of responsibility and lacking character, they held aloof in haughty isolation. They also had no sense of responsibility to the Fatherland. They never thought what immense harm that attitude meant to their country and themselves.

The lack of self-restraint and conviction displayed on all sides and the agitations of the Independent Social-Democratic Party found no counter-weight in the middle classes. It is a sad calamity that Germans, usually such clear thinkers, should helplessly lose their heads in the hour of danger, and allow everything for which they had hitherto lived to be taken from them. The middle classes are thus also responsible for the disaster to our Fatherland.

The foundations on which the glorious edifice of our army rested became unsound. The source from which our defenders should draw fresh strength was defiled.

Our War Chancellors did nothing to repair the damage or

enlighten the people. They had no creative ideas, and did nothing to hold the people together and lead them, unlike the great dictators, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson. The attempts of General Headquarters to help the homeland by patriotic instruction and disseminating our propaganda (intended for foreign consumption) within our own borders were mere crumbs to the hungry. The soul of the German people was without direction or leadership, a prey to every pernicious impression that came its way. Ignorant of the world and hopelessly misled, they strove after unattainable phantoms. Is it, then, to be wondered at that they turned to those who, either from fatal stupidity or from damnable and criminal design, seemed to offer them their heart's desire, and gave the cold shoulder to those who, realizing the danger of all this and inspired by deep concern for our future and ardent love for the country, demanded further and yet further sacrifices? It was a great calamity that these men were soon spoken of as "Never-enders," although they, too, were longing for peace.

The Press mirrored the dissensions caused by party politics among the Germans and the fluctuations of public feeling during the war. Only one section of the Press remained true to itself. Another section, from idealism, from motives of party politics, or simply for business reasons, assumed as an established fact that improvement in the world which the advocates of a peace by understanding had invented, and abandoned the views they had held in 1914. Finally, there were newspapers who were ashamed of their attitude in the autumn of 1914, and of all their thoughts of a good peace. It even seemed painful to them to be reminded of such manly thoughts. Even during the war they slandered Germany to her sons, and did everything possible to destroy the belief in German might. They also contained direct challenges to civil authority and order, not to mention open defiance of our whole social system. My deep patriotic feelings were wounded as I watched this development. These were serious warnings for us to keep close watch on everything that threatened the successful prosecution of the war—a writing on the wall for the moral resolution of the German nation, and

therefore the German army. This and much else was well known to our enemies, who joyfully drew their own conclusions.

In August, 1914, the whole Press, from inward conviction, had declared its support of our war of defence, and uttered fine determined words about the necessity of carrying it through to a successful issue. Unfortunately later on there was a change of tone in part of the Press. It failed to realize that such a war of defence could not be ended by a peace of understanding, but only by victory, if we were not to be defeated and forced to accept intolerable conditions. As with the Government and the nation, so with this section of the Press, the thoughts of an understanding with the enemy grew stronger than the thoughts of victory, with all its heavy demands on a people suffering privations. Many of the most widely circulated papers proclaimed themselves heralds of this new doctrine of world-reconciliation. They violently attacked those who were unwilling to believe in the enemy's readiness for peace, or at any rate insisted on maintaining our own fighting powers unimpaired, until the enemy had given some patent proof of it. They therefore attacked all who wished to keep the sword as sharp, and the arm that wielded it as strong, as was possible.

In this connection another idea was put forward, that the war could never be ended by a military decision—that is to say, by force of arms. No doubt the co-operation of the Government was required to exploit the effect of military successes. But the last word rested with the masses. There was no doubt about that. Were people really so ignorant of the enemy's lust for our destruction? Did they not understand the psychology and the speeches of a Lloyd George or a Clemenceau? Why fight another battle if it did not contribute towards securing victory or escaping defeat? Had they no idea of the state of mind of the man who has to leave his home, wife and children and good employment, and face hardship and danger, if it is all to no purpose and he is merely risking his own and his family's future? Was it impossible to understand the emotions of the man who, carrying his life in his hands, alone on a dark night,

struggles through a wilderness of muddy shell-holes to some point where Hell awaits him, or those of the man who is due to-morrow for the long-awaited leave, and has to go into action, and perhaps die, to-day? Ideas were thought out that were to make the world happy, thought ran far into the future, and the hard reality of the present was forgotten. No one remembered the mental agony of the soldier who was called upon to give his life.

We were thinking of every imaginable thing; we ought to have been thinking of the war alone.

The Press lacked the cohesion and unity so conspicuous with the enemy. Without guidance, it could so easily become, not merely a useless, but positively a dangerous weapon of war. The fact that this was not the case in purely military questions, for the Press carefully followed the instructions given to it, is a proof of its readiness to submit to a firm leadership based on mutual trust. There were, it is true, a few black sheep, but, in the main, my request that military events should be discussed from this or that point of view was complied with. I can only express my thanks, here and now. The quite comprehensible efforts to satisfy the reader's craving for novelty sometimes resulted in news of a purely military character, which only helped the enemy propaganda, finding its way into our Press from neutral or enemy sources. When one adds the sensational padding and headlines that are so dear to a section of our Press, our enemies could not desire better assistants in their propaganda work. Be it far from me to seek the causes of such stupidity in ill-will or sensation-mongering. Short-sightedness was often at the bottom of such cases, and still more frequently the great difficulties under which the Press worked, the calling-up of many trained men throwing an undue amount of work on to the editorial staff.

Under the impression the situation made on me, I appealed in December, 1916, to the Chancellor to establish under his direct supervision a bureau to ensure a uniform direction of the Press throughout the Empire on all matters. I have always regarded the control of the Press by the Foreign Office as a most

unfortunate arrangement, for that office thus gained an influence in internal politics which would have been better excluded. Of course, the interests of this department should be represented and considered, but the final control, embracing all government departments, could only be in the hands of the Chancellor, who was their constitutional head, and performed the duty of reconciling their needs and interests. In November, 1916, at the request of the Chancellor, I appointed Lieut.-Colonel Deutelmoser to be attached to his department, in the hope that after the resignation of *Geheimrat* Hammann some large scheme might be initiated. The work which was allotted to the Lieutenant-Colonel did not correspond to my expectations. In detail, my demands had been directed to securing the control of all the Press sections of the civil departments by some person of authority directly responsible to the Chancellor; the close co-operation of this authority with the War Press Bureau and the Press Department of the Admiralty; the limitation of the Press Department of the Foreign Office to questions of foreign politics, and in compensation, a more vigorous propaganda campaign in enemy, neutral and allied newspapers; finally, the representation and promotion of the domestic interests of the Press through one central bureau.

The Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, refused all my demands.

The unified control of the Press would have been a means of once more rousing the resolution of the German people and of overcoming disintegrating influences. Enemy propaganda must be countered immediately by explanation of an even more penetrating and persistent character and must be supplemented by the speeches of statesmen and leading thinkers, and oral propaganda generally. Every German, man or woman, should be told daily what the loss of the war would mean to the Fatherland. Pictures and the cinematograph had to be used for the same end. An explanation of the dangers confronting us would have had a different effect from the thought of war profits or all the talking and writing about a peace of understanding. What is equally important, it would have preserved us from greater dangers

and served the cause of peace. I did my best—and aroused considerable opposition.

The Press of Saxony, Würtemberg and Baden had a special position, but did their best to co-operate with us. The Bavarian Press, as time went on, followed its own devices more and more.

Our dealings with the Press were made considerably more difficult by the lack of any common representation. Its organization was as confusing as that of the imperial authorities. There was the "Press Committee," consisting of Berlin Press representatives, the Union of German Newspaper Publishers, and the Imperial Union of the German Press. These organizations, again, were not on good terms. The announcement "here's an Editor, here's a Publisher," and many others which revealed a lack of unity, assailed us constantly. This was a pity as it made a strong, uniform moulding of public opinion impossible. I have always estimated the influence of the Press very highly, not only in the capital, but also in the provinces.

I was always glad to receive representatives of the Press, so far as my duties permitted.

The channel of communication between G.H.Q. and the newspapers was the War Press Office. This was formed in October, 1915, out of various sections that had been part of the acting General Staff at the beginning of the war. Its duties were the perusal and censorship of the home and foreign Press and to act as censors. In the year 1917 a section was added to deal with Patriotic Instruction.

The most important civil departments of the Empire and Prussia were linked up with the War Press Office. The analogous naval office was the Press section of the Admiralty Staff. The War Press Office always worked in the closest touch with these organs.

The War Press Office, in accordance with its instructions, always refrained from exercising any political influence on the German Press. All statements to the contrary are false, as are the suggestions that it conducted some special policy of the General Staff.

The importance of the War Press Office lay in its strong organization, its staff, and the lack of any unified imperial organization. The Press was conscious of this. Their discontent was

not so much directed against the War Press Office, as against all the various official Press authorities which had no proper organization or direction.

The majority of the unjustified attacks made upon this office in the Reichstag were due to ignorance of the exact scope of its functions. They merely show how impossible it was for G.H.Q., with the means at its disposal, to increase our fighting capacity. The War Press Office was there, and people could form unfavourable opinions about it, but they did not inquire into the causes of its shortcomings and help me to promote the creation of an imperial organization.

The discussions that took place twice weekly with the members of the Berlin Press and the provincial Press represented in Berlin, in which, in addition to the War Press Office, representatives of the Naval Staff and all the imperial departments took part, were only of assistance to a section of the Press. Lectures were accordingly given from time to time by officials of the imperial departments to representatives of the provincial Press in different parts of the country.

An important function of the War Press Office was the study of the Press of neutral and enemy countries.

At the front the army newspapers had become more and more important. The Press Bureau of the General Staff of the Army in the Field supplied them with material, and also sent accounts of particularly heroic deeds of officers and men at the front to the minor newspapers at home.

In the occupied parts of France and the prisoners of war camps the *Gazette des Ardennes* did splendid work, winning the respect even of our enemies through its fairness and reliability. The same may be said of the *Russische Bote,* which was written in Russian and published under the direction of the War Ministry.

The war correspondents of the great German dailies were grouped in Press headquarters in the East and West, and so far as the military situation allowed, were informed as quickly and fully as possible of every new event, being given complete individual freedom. Within the necessary limits, they took part in the life of the troops and the staffs.

In addition, eminent military writers described the war situation from a comprehensive point of view.

It was the duty of the Chief Censorship Bureau in the War Press Office to secure uniform supervision of the military press in Germany, and obedience to the censorship regulations laid down by G.H.Q. With the same object it kept in touch with the Press departments in the occupied districts, and from time to time took similar steps in co-operation with the military Press censorships of our Allies.

The censorship regulations issued by G.H.Q. extended to everything which might hinder the effective prosecution of the war. They did not go beyond that. The Chief Censorship Bureau also transmitted to the military authorities at home the general instructions laid down by the Imperial authorities. This led to serious misunderstandings and to impossible attitudes. It happened more than once that the G.O.C.'s at home issued as instructions from G.H.Q. censorship regulations which were merely passed to them in the ordinary way by the Chief Censorship Bureau, thus naturally creating feeling against us. The conduct of Press supervision was no part of the duty of the Chief Censorship Bureau. It was in the hands of the G.O.C.'s. The Bureau gave advice to the supreme military authority (the Minister for War) when asked to do so, and kept him informed of any events which they thought required his attention. G.H.Q. was thus not in a position to take direct action against any newspaper, but could merely draw the attention of the Government, more especially the War Ministry, or in urgent cases the G.O.C.'s of the Corps Districts, when we thought that the attitude of any particular paper was injurious to the prosecution of the war.

There was, legally speaking, no political censorship. This was a mistake, and the cause of much mischief. The Government itself often directed the Chief Censorship Bureau to issue some particular regulation. When I looked closer into these proceedings, I protested against any such use of the military censorship and put a stop to it.

The subordination of the Chief Censorship Bureau to G.H.Q. was not a happy arrangement. The conditions prevailing at the

beginning of the war had compelled the General Staff to institute it as a measure of self-help. All censorship must excite opposition, and this will, of necessity, become more vocal as pacifist tendencies gain ground and the currents of domestic politics find themselves kept within bounds. G.H.Q. suffered much from this. The appointment, in the autumn of 1916, of the Minister for War as the supreme military authority at home did something to ease my position with regard to the Press. Unfortunately in 1917 the Minister refused to take over the Chief Censorship Bureau.

The Press of our Allies was better controlled by their Governments than was the case with us; in Bulgaria and Turkey, however, it had not the importance it possessed in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Our Allies also exercised a severe political censorship.

In Austria-Hungary the Government failed to take any steps to maintain *moral* or to rally the nation to action. In their last fight for existence the Governments of the Dual Monarchy were in no sense the leaders of their peoples.

Public opinion in Turkey was almost inarticulate, though rather less so in Bulgaria, where also the Government failed to lead the people.

It was particularly painful for us to see with what lack of appreciation Germany was spoken of in the Press of her Allies. Our Nibelung loyalty was, after all, no mere empty word, and the German blood spilt on foreign fields should have earned us gratitude at least. In the end Lieut.-Colonel Nicolai succeeded in making definite arrangements for the publication of military news, at any rate in the Press of the Quadruple Alliance, and this mitigated the evils to a certain extent. Tours of journalists from the allied countries were also expected to do useful educational work, but did not, in fact, make much difference.

In this matter also our Government failed to take energetic measures. It should have undertaken explanatory propaganda on a large scale among our Allies, and thus have done good service to the Fatherland for the post-war period as well.

By degrees the military foreign propaganda department established branches in the allied countries.

VIII

Good propaganda must keep well ahead of actual political events. It must act as pacemaker to policy and mould public opinion without appearing to do so. Before political aims are translated into action, the world has to be convinced of their necessity and moral justification. What one desires to achieve must seem to be simply a psychological consequence of existing facts. We made no use of propaganda abroad, hardly knowing anything about it, although at home very skilful work was done against certain persons. Our political aims and decisions, issued to the world as sudden surprises, often seemed to be merely brutal and violent. This could have been skilfully avoided by broad and far-sighted propaganda.

Not only had we had no inclination for propaganda work in peace time, but we were also lacking in the necessary facilities. We had no world telegraph service, with its chain of cable and wireless stations. Efforts to remedy this had not yet been made. We lacked a leading journal of a strong national character, possessing influence abroad and weight at home, like the *Times* in England, the *Temps* in France, and the *Novoe Vremya* in Russia. All these three papers took their stand on strong national platforms. The newspapers from which foreigners received direct information from Germany were all devotees of internationalism, fundamentally opposed to our form of government, and gave a false and one-sided picture of our life and thought and of the conditions in Germany.

In the field of propaganda, we had much to catch up. We had to start the fight against the enemy's home front, and to use it with all our might to intensify the effect of the submarine campaign, which had just been decided on. We could not renounce the use of weapons which might prove decisive.

I learnt from discussions which I had with leading men that there was still, even at this stage of the war, immense ignorance as to the real necessity of a propaganda animated by great

live ideas and capable of seizing the popular imagination. The attitude of the Government was lukewarm and doubting. They did not yet understand the nature of propaganda. They were opposed to it on the ground that it was too blatant and vulgar, whereas true propaganda implies that its activities are unobserved. It works silently. Doubtless because they realized their own powerlessness, the Government thought that any wide and powerful counter-organization on our part against the enemy propaganda would be more or less a hopeless undertaking. This point of view, or the remark: "Our cause is good, we need no advocate," could lead to nothing. We had every reason to take action, not merely to defend ourselves, but to pass from defence to attack. Only so could we treat our enemy as he treated us, and hold our own in the mighty world struggle.

When I came to G.H.Q. I found only very poor arrangements, hardly deserving the name of a propaganda organization.

I will say nothing about the Erzberger Bureau, as I have no knowledge of its activities. It was given up later.

In the summer of 1916 G.H.Q. had requested the Government to establish a strong propaganda organization. After many objections had been over-ruled, especially on the part of the Foreign Office, the military branch of this department was set up in July.

Side by side with this branch, which was to deal with the purely military aspect, the Foreign Office took up the question of the establishment of similar branches for political and economic propaganda. It was only on this understanding that the Chief of the General Staff in the field had set up the military branch. All three branches were to work on the same lines, laid down by the Foreign Office, and carry on a wide and energetic counter-propaganda campaign, not merely contenting themselves with a feeble defence against the enemy's lies, but attack their propaganda directly. The political and economic propaganda service of the Foreign Office was unfortunately confined to a Press and pamphlet service, which was mainly devoted to influencing the Press by means of *démentis*, discussions of political events, and

exposures of enemy weaknesses. It was like dropping water on a hot stone, and was not of the least importance.

In the military department of the Foreign Office Colonel von Haeften gradually built up a large organization. This was under G.H.Q., but was in the main financed by the Foreign Office, which received in return the right of joint supervision and of dictating lines of policy, rights of which it made virtually no use.

Colonel von Haeften is an officer of unusually high intelligence and glowing patriotism. Everything he undertakes bears witness to his unflagging energy, born of inspiration, and he possesses a gift for constructive work and carrying his colleagues with him. What has been achieved is in all essentials the work of himself and his associates.

By word and picture, and, above all, by means of the cinematograph, Colonel von Haeften tried to gain a secure footing in neutral countries.

Oral propaganda was considered of the utmost importance. The transmission of news from mouth to mouth is the best, because it is the most dangerous, means of propaganda. The idea is planted, and no man knows whence it came.

Propaganda by pictures and film was encouraged by the formation of a special pictorial department, the " Picture and Film Office," and later of the Universum Film Company, Limited. The film is a means of popular education, and Colonel von Haeften desired to employ it as such after the war, his war organization being designed to that end. Pictures and films, and illustrations in poster form, strike home more and produce greater effects than writing, and thus have a greater influence on the masses.

In connection with this, Press propaganda was carried on by telegraphic, wireless and correspondence services, there was propaganda by pamphlets and lectures, and work was also done in connection with the neutral War Press camp. Above all, Colonel von Haeften sought by distributing news quickly to find the way into the unfriendly section of the neutral Press.

Art propaganda was also encouraged. Here, perhaps, we went too far. The Foreign Office attached special importance to this, having, indeed, taken it up some time before.

At our embassies in allied and neutral countries, and also in the occupied districts in the East, military propaganda offices were established as branches of Colonel von Haeften's organization, working up, with an eye to the special circumstances of the country, the material supplied from the central organization, and then distributing it. They worked in the closest touch with the ambassador.

It was quite impossible for Colonel von Haeften by himself to recover all the ground that we had lost in the long years before, and after, the outbreak of war, and to get on equal terms with the enemy propaganda and the public opinion it had created in neutral countries, let alone to penetrate into the enemy countries themselves. The insular position of England and America made this impossible. The gates of entry into France were Spain and Switzerland. From Spain we were cut off, and there was nothing left but the short Swiss frontier. This applied to Italy as well.

The German propaganda was only kept going with difficulty. In spite of all our efforts, its achievements, in comparison to the magnitude of the task, were inadequate. We produced no real effect on the enemy peoples. With them a strong Government, with its heart in the war, ruthlessly suppressed every sentiment of weakness or softness, and all talk of peace, especially a real "peace of understanding."

In neutral countries, and among our allies, too, we achieved next to nothing.

We also attempted to carry on propaganda on the enemy fronts. In the East the Russians were the authors of their own collapse, and our work there was of secondary importance. In the West the fronts of our enemies had not been made susceptible by the state of public opinion in their home countries, and the propaganda we gradually introduced had no success.

Matters would have been different if the Chancellor had supported Colonel von Haeften with all the authority of his high office and with real resolution. I often begged him to create some great organization. It became undeniably essential to establish an Imperial Ministry of Propaganda. I attached the more importance to this, as propaganda by the speeches of

statesmen proved its value more and more. Lord Northcliffe was not wrong when he claimed that the speech of an English statesman was worth £20,000; if it was copied in the German Press it was worth £50,000; if the Germans did not reply to it it was worth £100,000. We made no effective reply to the barrage of speeches from enemy statesmen, still less did we think of suppressing them. The campaign against these speeches could not be organized by the military branch of the Foreign Office, nor could it be done by any body, save an imperial department possessing special powers. At last a feeble step in this direction was taken in August, 1918. A totally inadequate organization was set up; besides, it was then too late.

In these circumstances it was quite impossible to achieve uniformity in propaganda work between Germany and Austria-Hungary, as was so conspicuously the case with our enemies. We regarded everything as a " domestic " question that concerned Austria-Hungary or ourselves exclusively, instead of realizing that we were but one body, against which the enemy had raised his threatening arm for one destructive blow.

The Army found no ally in a strong propaganda directed from home. While her Army was victorious on the field of battle, Germany failed in the fight against the *moral* of the enemy peoples.

IX

In the autumn of 1916 the Army received only slight moral support from home. But so far this had not led to inconvenience. The Army was tired and very exhausted, but its spirits were good and its *moral* was high.

There was close mutual co-operation between the Army and the homeland.

Leave was given as generously as possible. The number of men on leave was always smaller than the Army, and I personally, desired. Apart altogether from the military situation, transport conditions made it impossible to grant leave on the scale which I would have wished. In critical times leave had to be cut down.

The sick and wounded also took home news of the Army, and the Army heard all about affairs at home from the drafts sent up, and returned wounded.

The letter, newspaper and parcel post worked well, and the Army's choice of newspapers was not limited. Only certain organs of the Independent Social Democrats were forbidden. The right to ban any newspaper was in the hands of the Army Commanders. I know of only a few isolated instances in which this right was exercised.

The Army was still receiving adequate reinforcements. These had, however, to be used, not only to bring existing formations up to strength, but also, however reluctantly, for forming new divisions, which were needed to give us a freer hand in dealing with the expected attacks in the East and West. The thirteen divisions thus raised, at the cost, it is true, of reducing battalion strengths, were expected to be ready for the field in the spring of 1917.

One result of trench warfare was that troops which were short of special labour companies set up all sorts of administrative institutions themselves. These were, of course, permanently retained in their sectors, the men remaining behind when their divisions were relieved. All sorts of difficulties arose from this, and everything suffered. A permanent administration company was therefore formed in every division out of the men engaged in this special work, who *ipso facto* left their old units. The strengths of the battalions mainly affected by this were again reduced, a step necessary in any case, as the young company commanders were not equal to taking charge of more than two hundred men, or to leading them in the field.

An artillery commander was allotted to each division. Many new formations were raised of field and heavy artillery. A special army field artillery was organized, in addition to the divisional artillery, which it was to support in the fighting line. Nine batteries were insufficient even for a divisional front of two to three kilometres, the demand for artillery having risen to incredible heights.

The new organization was accompanied by new equipment.

Our air forces, in particular our aeroplanes, were further developed. They had reached such proportions that it seemed necessary to place them under a special General, who should be directly under the Chief of the General Staff in the Field. The first Director of Air Services was General von Höppner. This officer, who had proved his worth as Chief of Staff of an Army, and as a leader of troops, now did all that lay in his power to develop this arm of the future. His Chief of Staff was Colonel Thomsen, who had hitherto commanded the air forces single-handed. In spite of the efforts of the General Staff in peace time, we had begun the war with insufficient air equipment. Germany and the German Army owe it to the enormous creative energy of Colonel Thomsen and of Lieut.-Colonel Siegert, who worked at home, that our aircraft went from success to success during the war. At the moment the most important thing was to increase our chaser squadrons and to provide them with a good fighting machine, without, however, reducing the supply of other varieties. Considerable attention was also devoted to bombing squadrons.

The airship disappeared from the fighting equipment of the Army. It offered too large a target. The Navy continued to use it.

Anti-aircraft defences were perfected and increased, and defensive arrangements at the front and at home organized on the largest scale. This cost us men and material, which had to be taken from the front.

Trench warfare offered no scope for cavalry. The formation of regiments of dismounted cavalry, of battalion strength, out of the cavalry regiments, with which a start had already been made, was now continued, and the Landsturm and Landwehr squadrons were broken up. Their horses were urgently required for the reorganization of the artillery and for our transport. The wastage in horses was extraordinarily high, and the import from neutral countries hardly worth consideration. The home-land and the occupied districts could not make good the shortage. There were many gaps. Our thoroughbreds had proved their worth, but our lighter strains were not good enough. We had

not paid enough attention to their breeding. The heavy draught horses turned out to be quite unequal to the strain of war.

G.H.Q. was compelled to allot the supply and transport, which had hitherto been part of the divisional organization, to the armies, and to localize them in the army areas. During the defensive battles the railways had been overtaxed, owing to the continual relief of divisions when the latter were accompanied by their complete transport and columns. I much regretted the new arrangements we were thus compelled to adopt, for the supervision and care were more satisfactory in the hands of divisions than in those of armies and groups.

The construction of positions in the West was systematically revised, from the point of view of the new theory of distribution in depth and the most careful adaptation to the ground. In the East they were able to retain more of their old form. In addition to the construction of the two great strategic lines in the West, there was much work to be done there on all fronts, the existing positions in Flanders, to the east of Arras, and at Verdun being deepened, while the Alsace-Lorraine front, where so far not enough had been done, was also strengthened. The Army worked hard at these positions, the men understanding that they were digging for their lives. The labour that we received from home was insufficient for all that had to be done on the far-flung fronts. We were thus forced, unfortunately, to employ troops on the work, and their time for rest and training was curtailed. Of course the two demands conflicted. The armies wanted to get on with their fortification, which seemed to them the most vital thing, whilst Lieut.-Colonel Wetzell and I insisted on the necessity for training. Many compromises had to be arrived at.

For the education of the Army for the coming great defensive battles, a booklet, " The Defensive Battle," was written. Colonel Bauer and Captain Geyer, who combined a wonderful power of expression with a remarkable knowledge of tactics, were chiefly responsible for it.

In sharp contrast to the form of defence hitherto employed, which had been restricted to rigid and easily recognized lines of

little depth, a new system was devised, which, by distribution in depth and the adoption of a loose formation, enabled a more active defence to be maintained. It was of course intended that the position should remain in our hands at the end of the battle, but the infantryman need no longer say to himself: "Here I must stand or fall," but had, on the contrary, the right, within certain limits, to retire in any direction before strong enemy fire. Any part of the line that was lost was to be recovered by counter-attack. The group, on the importance of which many intelligent officers had insisted before the war, now became officially the tactical unit of the infantry. The position of the N.C.O. as group leader thus became much more important. Tactics became more and more individualized. Having regard to the ever more scanty training of our officers, N.C.O.'s and men, and the consequent falling-off in discipline, it was a risky business, of the success of which many eminent soldiers were sceptical, to make even greater demands on the subordinate leaders and the individual soldier.

The controversy raged furiously in my Staff; I myself had to intervene to advocate the new tactics. The new pamphlet embodied all the lessons we had learnt in the Somme battles, both as to the employment of artillery and aircraft and as to the co-operation of the various arms. It became a standard text-book for the whole army, and for the armies of our allies, so far as conditions with them permitted. Without this last limitation the booklet was dangerous, for it made demands on the men which could only be fulfilled by troops which, if no longer trained to perfection, were at any rate animated by a spirit of self-sacrifice and true discipline.

This "Defensive Battle" booklet was completed by the "Manual for the Training of Infantry in War," which was drawn up by the Army Headquarters of General Fritz von Below. This document demonstrates that eminent general's thorough grasp of the character of our infantry. My Staff compiled a large number of other manuals on special arms and field fortifications. The training manual for the artillery was not completed in the course of the winter, but its main points were contained in "The Defensive Battle." It had become clear in the course of

the war that the " Art of Shooting " could not be thrown on the scrap-heap but on the contrary must be advanced to the highest point. With that end in view, special monthly periodicals dealing with shooting and technical artillery questions were prepared by the Director of Artillery at G.H.Q. and distributed to the troops.

A vigorous intellectual life was observable in all branches of the army. We kept in close touch with the feeling in the army. It was supplied with the best that could be given.

Manuals and pamphlets were useless by themselves ; they had to be ground into the flesh and blood of officers and men. We held courses at Valenciennes for senior officers and General Staff Officers with a view to inculcating clear and sound ideas about defensive warfare. The German Crown Prince instituted a similar course at Sedan.

Courses of all kinds were arranged by the Army staffs, in particular for the training of junior officers as company commanders, and for N.C.O.'s.

For all arms the basis of everything was the maintenance and improvement of discipline, without which no army can exist. Discipline was also required, at this stage of the war, to counterbalance the many unavoidable discomforts which affected the life of the troops. The frequent changes and the constant shifting of units made billeting conditions ever more difficult. The danger of the men taking anything they happened to want increased. The importance of " Mine " and " Thine " was frequently lost sight of. Clothing and equipment had deteriorated, and were consequently more difficult to keep in repair. Many causes, not the least of which was the want of proper lighting arrangements in the dug-outs, led to a neglect of outward appearances. The men " let things rip." Life at the front was bound to tell on them. On strong characters it had a stimulating effect, but these were rare, and the *moral* of the great mass was sure to suffer, increasingly so the longer the war lasted. Any thinking soldier knew that. It had, indeed, been the case in every war. The necessity for moral support from home, to maintain the feeling of duty and discipline at the

front, was all the greater; and the homeland could only give such support if its own *moral* was high. The way in which the troops behaved in public places and their attention to saluting were sure tests of the condition of the army. Their conduct was by no means always good in this respect.

The infantry was trained in the new methods, and in musketry; courses for group and company commanders were continued everywhere.

The training of machine-gunners was carried out on the most comprehensive scale, and a special practice-ground was set aside for the marksmen detachments.

On our artillery ranges the artillery improved its shooting and its co-operation with aircraft. The dilution brought about by the large number of new formations had to be remedied by most careful training on all parts of the front.

Trench mortar units also, as well as pioneers and signallers, were given special schools and training grounds, on which they studied the particular uses of their weapons; but officers of other arms were also instructed there.

Training was carried on without interruption, both in and behind the line. The life was much the same as in peace time. Everywhere efforts were made to fit the army for its heavy task, and to keep its losses within bounds.

At home, work proceeded on similar lines. Unfortunately conditions were unfavourable, the instructional personnel being too old. Rations were short, and depot units were too much in touch with home and not enough with the army. I always tried to have recruits trained as far as possible at recruit depots behind the front. A start was made and more was done as time went on.

Of course, all our leaders, myself included, made every effort to prevent the troops from becoming tired or stale under training. Physical rest was an absolute necessity for the maintenance even of discipline, and it was only by adequate periods of relaxation in rest-billets that men could gradually recover from the heavy moral strain. They had to be provided with comfortable quarters. Recuperation was impossible in empty huts,

and we had to take over furniture and fittings from the civil population. Unfortunately this did not always remain in the district, the troops taking it with them when they were moved. As for recreation, there were the military bands, which were very popular, physical games of all kinds, amateur dramatics and touring companies, and libraries.

The ranks of the regular N.C.O.'s were greatly thinned. Many of them had, like the regular officers, fallen in battle, and others had been transferred to new formations, or sent home for instructional duties. The men promoted from the ranks at the front to take their places had not had sufficient training in leadership and did not look after the men well enough. Discipline was impaired by life in the trenches, where differences of rank disappeared for the time, and the danger that the new N.C.O.'s would not have enough authority was inevitable. The bulk of the N.C.O.'s proved themselves excellent subordinate leaders in the field, and trustworthy assistants to the officers; they fulfilled their difficult task loyally, and the country owes them a debt of gratitude.

The officers were fully conscious of the importance of their duties as trainers and teachers of their men. This, too, will ultimately be recognized. In peace time it took from twelve to fifteen years before an officer commanded his company. By that time the qualifications which fitted him for his task—service experience, handling of men, care for his subordinates—had become second nature to him. During the war young men of two or three years' service had to lead companies. Many succeeded, but others failed in many ways. The capacity for leadership is a gift, the result of education and tact. Zeal and courage cannot always take its place. Everything was done, at home and at the front, to secure the thorough training of company commanders, but there is no doubt that the complaints of the men as to their inexperience were, at bottom, justified. This was a very serious matter, involving the danger of destroying the admirable relations that had hitherto existed between officers and men.

The excellent regular officer, so often the object of attacks,

was no longer available. The green grass was growing on his grave. In the short period of the war, it was impossible to train a new generation of these men, with the same high professional qualities, the same thorough knowledge, and the same sense of responsibility towards their men as had been possessed by officers trained through a long course of years. Nothing could provide a more striking justification of our whole army system than the events of this war. A well-known Social Democratic member of the Reichstag, who visited me as a war correspondent at Kovno, told me emphatically that he had been compelled fundamentally to revise his opinion of the regular officer. He said that in his view they looked after their men with the most thorough devotion and understanding, and that officers of the Reserve found it much more difficult. I was greatly gratified by this frank and striking admission.

In the circumstances there should have been more frequent promotion of regular N.C.O.'s to commissioned rank. This was done here and there. My former orderly-room clerk in Düsseldorf was an officer in a field regiment as early as the autumn of 1914.

Owing to the insufficient training and lack of experience of the company commanders, especially with regard to interior economy, the part played by the C.O. became much more important. Unfortunately, battalion commanders were often drawn from the Reserve, and were thus naturally somewhat deficient in knowledge of administration, although owing to their greater age they were more reliable. The war must have made extraordinary demands on men of their age, for in defensive battles they had to go into the front line again and again. Both their health and their nerves were subjected to the greatest strain. They did admirable work in battle, just as good as that of battalion commanders on the active list.

The duties of regimental commanders were varied and exceptionally arduous. They were everywhere directly responsible for their troops, and had to answer to their superiors for the appearance and *moral*, the success or failure, the weal or woe, of every single man under their command. The outward appearance and

inward bearing of the troops, and especially of the Corps of Officers, were indicative of the personality, the will, the capacity, of the commander. He had to inspire his officers and men with his own spirit ; he was their example and their stay, their counsellor and friend in periods of inactivity as in battle.

In trench warfare it was very difficult for him to influence his officers and men, but in the end he set the seal of his personality upon them. There was a high rate of wastage among regimental commanders, owing to wounds, and frequent changes were thus necessary. There was often insufficient time for a commander to establish mutual confidence between himself and his regiment. Some commanders, however, retained their regiments for very long periods, sometimes for almost the whole of the war. Some of them, owing to heavy losses, had to renew their regiments completely three or four times. Humanly speaking that was too heavy a burden on them, for they left a bit of themselves behind each time

After the regimental commander the next in importance was the divisional commander, who took the position occupied in peace time by the Corps commander. Hard as G.H.Q. tried, it proved impossible, in view of the constant troop movements involved in trench warfare, to maintain the unity of the Corps. This was a decided drawback. The divisions gradually acquired greater independence in every respect, and the divisional commander thus became more important. Through his hands passed all the threads from above and below, fighting, training and administration. He was the instructor of his troops. It was impossible to devote too much care to the selection of these officers.

The General Staff officer was, so to speak, a man apart. As the war became more technical, his duties became more arduous. It was no longer sufficient for him to have a general knowledge of all arms and their employment. He had to be a good artillery-man and, in addition, to possess a sound knowledge of the use of aircraft, signalling, supply questions and a thousand other things, while he had to master many details which the divisional commander had no time to settle. In spite of every effort to

keep them brief, the orders which he had to draft grew ever longer and more complicated. The more technical the war became, the more did these orders grow into veritable works of art, involving infinite skill and knowledge. There was no other way, if things were to go smoothly. The variety of his functions often compelled the General Staff officer to keep many things in his own hands. Care had to be taken that the independence of other services did not suffer on this account, and that the commander, too, was not "shelved." I could never have allowed either of these developments.

The commanders remained commanders. They were the leaders and instructors of their troops, and could not be in too close touch with them. The General Staff officer was their helper and adviser, and was responsible for the smooth working of the machinery. Their tasks were different, but there was plenty for both of them to do. They were both responsible for the welfare of the troops. Apart from that the G.S.O. of the Division had no direct responsibility, this falling on the Chiefs of Staff at Corps and Army Headquarters, in the widest sense possible in military life. The duty of the G.S.O. was to keep in the background and to work with unremitting energy.

The selection and training of General Staff officers was difficult I only accepted officers who were familiar with regimental duty War experience, however, and the education given in the special courses held at Sedan, formed no real substitute for the thorough training of peace time. G.H.Q. did have some complaints from the troops against them, mainly on the score of their youth, but on the whole they were highly respected. The General Staff itself required a large number of officers, who were thus lost to the fighting arms. I had to take youngish men, to avoid robbing the troops of too many officers capable of holding commands. I found among the officers I selected many clever, manly and honourable men, who understood their work and carried it out with tact. The Socialist leader whom I have already mentioned told me (once more going back on his previous views) that he regarded the General Staff officer as the soul of the war. He was right.

I have been told since the war ended that from personal motives the General Staff did not keep me accurately informed, but continually gave too favourable a description of the situation. This allegation does not correspond to facts, and is an insult to the General Staff, to which the Army owes an immeasurable debt.

I have always focussed my attention on the officers generally, not the Staff officers, for I regarded them as the backbone of the Army. In one of my last Routine Orders in October, 1918, I stated that in my view they were called upon to take a decisive part in the reconstruction of the country.

Our officers have done their duty. Their terrible losses are an eloquent proof of that. It cannot be made a matter of reproach against them that many of them had insufficient experience, for this was simply due to war conditions and to their heavy losses. These inexperienced men, at any rate, knew how to go bravely to their death. In trouble, danger or battle the men always relied on and looked up to their officer, even when he was but a boy. Even if some officers did fail to strike the right note in dealing with their men, if some of them were even gravely lacking in their duty to the ranks, that is nothing against the officers' corps in general. Things were what, in war, they must be.

In the long period of trench warfare the practice of interfering with the subordinate leaders had notably increased. This was a most unfortunate development, due in part to the many telephone lines available, but also to some extent to the inexperience of the junior Staff. Every leader needed scope for his activities. Again and again I impressed on the Corps staffs and the General Staff that there should be no limitation of these leaders' authority, which is contrary to the nature of war.

The training of the Army laid an immense burden of work on G.H.Q. I had the gratification of knowing that the Army Headquarters Staffs in the West were in agreement with our policy and measures.

Of course, at the end of January, 1917, nothing had been finished. The raising of the new formations and reorganization

were still under way. The Army was only gradually beginning to get stronger. The troops had suffered too severely. The general principles of the new regulations were understood, but had not been thoroughly ground into the troops. The supply of material was still in arrears. In spite of all our pains, in spite of incessant labour, the strain on the Western Front had not been definitely relieved.

In the East and in Rumania, also, work was proceeding energetically on the same lines as in the West. The Commander-in-Chief in the East and General von Mackensen were entrusted with the necessary modifications for the conditions of that theatre. For the rest, the troops there were in the same condition as those in the West.

Training was also intensified in the Austro–Hungarian Army, but progress here was slow.

General von Below had also taken the Bulgarian Army in hand, but both their language and their national sentiment remained foreign to us. It was very difficult for us to make much progress in the face of the Bulgarian distrust of German tutelage. Nevertheless, the spirit of the Bulgarian Army began to improve, although their G.H.Q. itself did nothing really resolute as regards its training.

In the Turkish Army Liman Pasha alone worked wholeheartedly. The Turkish troops in Galicia and Rumania were trained on German lines, and not without success. There they were satisfactory, while on other fronts they were of little value.

G.H.Q. did all it could to strengthen our war-machine. Meanwhile, however, the attempt to increase our numbers through the formation of a Polish army, and thus to wipe out the numerical superiority of the enemy, had been a sorry failure.

X

The employment of the fighting resources of the Poles, whom we had freed from the Russian yoke, was important for the successful prosecution of the war. I had already given the

matter my consideration earlier, and ultimately I sanctioned recruiting for the Polish legion. They would not join up, however. The Russian Poles held absolutely aloof, and there seemed no prospect of any alteration in the composition of the Polish Legion, which was drawn mainly from Galician Poland.

In the earlier stages of the war, Poland reckoned on obtaining her independence with the help of Russia. A manifesto of the Grand Duke Nicholas had promised the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland within its former frontiers, under the sceptre of the Tsar of Russia, and this had doubtless made a great impression on all the Poles. The whole position had now been fundamentally changed. They could only hope to gain their independence by throwing in their lot with us, and not even then unless we could overthrow Russia. This we had to attempt also on military grounds. It seemed to me possible that Poland would give her sons to a fight for freedom against Russia. Here, as indeed in many other matters, their interests were really identical with ours.

When I became First Quartermaster-General, on the 29th August, I found that there was an agreement in existence, made on the 11th August in Vienna by the Chancellor with Baron von Burian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dual Monarchy, which bound Germany and Austria–Hungary to establish an independent kingdom of Poland, with an hereditary monarchy, a constitutional government and a national army under a single command, which was to be entrusted to Germany. The proposed foundation of this State was to be announced by both countries as soon as possible, but it was not to be actually established until later. Vilna was to be included in the new territory, whose frontiers were to be extended eastwards as far as the Peace Treaty would make possible.

This new Poland was to be accepted as a member of the alliance of the two empires, and its foreign policy was to be conducted accordingly.

The two Central Powers mutually guaranteed their existing Polish possessions, and provided for the frontier rectifications which would have to be made for the greater security of their

territory at the expense of Russian Poland. Such claims were to be limited to strict military necessities. In the autumn of 1914 and in 1915 von Bethmann had frequently asked for my views as to the proper demarcation of this frontier.

Views differed as to the economic future of Poland. Von Bethmann aimed at its incorporation in the German customs union, but this went too far for Baron Burian, who wished to see a separate Polish tariff system. Expression was given to the desire of both parties that the customs and transport restrictions which still separated the German and Austro–Hungarian districts should be as far as possible eliminated.

No special provision was made for the possibility, which was certainly highly unlikely, of a separate peace with Russia.

It was clear, and the characters of both von Bethmann and Baron Burian made it certain, that this agreement could not have been reached without very long discussions, which had probably started as early as the year 1915.

In any case, the Chancellor had stated on the 5th April, 1916, that the Polish question was ripe for settlement, and that Germany and Austria–Hungary would have to find the solution.

The Governor-General in Warsaw had also attacked the problem of raising a Polish army, and arrived at very favourable conclusions.

The establishment of the Kingdom of Poland, with an army of its own, was now decided upon by this agreement. The Governor-General of Poland regarded the formation of this army as not merely possible, but, as a result of his inquiries, extremely promising. The uncommonly difficult military situation made an accession of strength to the Quadruple Alliance more than urgent. G.H.Q. felt, of course, compelled to go further with the proposal for the formation of a Polish army. Any hesitation would have been wrong, for it was a question of victory or defeat, life or death, for Germany. What might happen later could be left to be dealt with when it came. The position of the war at the beginning of September had made the danger in which we stood only too clear to all of us.

Shortly afterwards at Pless a series of conferences on the

Polish question were held, at which General von Beseler was present, between the officials responsible for the policy and military operations of Germany and Austria-Hungary. These were of importance to me only so far as they dealt with the possibility of obtaining a Polish army to reinforce our own.

General von Beseler held to his favourable view, although General von Conrad uttered a strong warning against optimism. The former stated that a fundamental condition for complete success was the proclamation of the kingdom and the establishment of a single administration in Poland by the amalgamation of the two Governments of Lublin and Warsaw. Until that was done the Poles would not be convinced that the Central Powers were really in earnest as to the carrying out of their Polish proposals. I thought that there must be a great deal of truth in this. In the interests of the creation of this new army, I pressed the proposed amalgamation of the two Governments earnestly on Baron Burian. The statesmen could not come to any agreement. The wishes of the Dual Monarchy and the fear of domestic difficulties were more important to Baron Burian than the common prosecution of the war. The amalgamation of the two Governments, advocated by G.H.Q. and by General von Beseler, was dropped. General von Beseler, nevertheless, thought that it would still be possible to form an army, if the Central Powers proclaimed the establishment of the Polish Kingdom. He proposed that for a start four or five divisions should be formed, for which the Polish legion should form the nucleus. He hoped to be able to place these divisions at the disposal of G.H.Q. in April, 1917, and then to proceed with the formation of further ones. It was not much, but it did offer us the hope of some increase of strength. The war might still last for years, and every new addition to our forces should be welcomed. The military situation compelled us to agree to General von Beseler's proposal, and G.H.Q. accordingly adopted the policy which he held to be feasible.

The Imperial Government now proceeded to carry out the programme of von Bethmann and Baron Burian for the creation of the Kingdom of Poland, while we discussed the raising of a

Polish army with General von Beseler and the Austro-Hungarian General Staff.

Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe begged me to urge on Minister von Löbell my views as to the necessity for the Polish army. I did so, stating in a private letter that the real ground of this necessity was the iron need of more men for the war.

I am not acquainted with the details of the proceedings in Berlin. The Chancellor and General von Beseler warmly advocated the raising of the Polish army and the establishment of the kingdom. There was, however, considerable opposition to this second step in many quarters in Germany. Rumours soon circulated from Berlin that I was the author of the plan. I repeatedly requested the Government to explain the matter properly, but, unfortunately, in spite of my request, not a statesman could be found who was willing to set out the whole position in its true context. Just as in the question of the submarine campaign, so now, in the autumn of 1916, G.H.Q. was for the second time involved without any act of its own in a political controversy ; on this occasion, moreover, the result was to hinder the prosecution of the war. Was it surprising that I felt absolutely disgusted by this procedure ? Everybody who worked with me knows that I was always ready for frank discussion, and listened willingly to arguments against my views, but that I insisted on absolute honesty.

I was called in by the Chancellor to assist in drafting the proclamation for the foundation of the Kingdom of Poland.

In my view the proclamation was ambiguous, and I said so.

The Proclamation of the Kingdom on the 5th November, and the steps taken to form a Polish army proved to be a ploughing of the sands. We soon saw that General von Conrad had correctly judged the situation. Once and for all I had to abandon all hope of our army being strengthened by Polish troops. General von Beseler, too, recognized that he had been mistaken. Thus ended for good the question of forming a Polish army. The idea of forming a Polish national militia, which was mooted from time to time subsequently, and intermittently advocated by General von Beseler and the Austro-Hungarian Govern-

ment, was henceforth received unfavourably at G.H.Q. In view of the ambiguous attitude of Poland, any arming of that country presented dangers which it was as much our duty to avoid as previously it had been to attempt to obtain an accession of strength from that country.

Any amount of time and energy was wasted on these fruitless negotiations, in which the only point of interest was provided by the perseverance with which the Austro–Hungarian statesmen pursued their anti-German ends in Poland.

The formation of a Polish army failed for political reasons. Poland apparently preferred to achieve her ends against Germany and Austro–Hungary with the aid of the Entente. Manpower she had in plenty, even after sending labour to Germany and Austria–Hungary. In this sense the man-power question had no influence on the problem of the formation of an army. Naturally we continued to make every effort to recruit labour in Poland on the largest possible scale, and to make use of the country for the prosecution of the war.

To attribute the present conditions in Poland and our Eastern districts to our attempt to establish the kingdom is to overstep the mark. If the kingdom had never been proclaimed, if the attempt to raise an army had never been made, events would have followed the same course, for their true causes are to be sought in history, in the strong national sentiment of the Poles and the traditional hostility between Poles and Germans.

In the discussions concerning the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland and the formation of the Polish army we touched also on the possibility of a separate peace with Russia. The intentions of the Central Powers with regard to Poland were obviously a stumbling-block in the way of any such step. A separate peace with Russia has always figured prominently in the thoughts of the German people. As early as the autumn of 1914 I received "authentic" news of the presence of Count Witte in Berlin. This was, of course, no more than an empty rumour, England and France having then much too firm a hold on Russia. Stürmer had now been Premier for a long time, and there was again talk of the possibility of peace being secured

through his influence. Naturally, peace with Russia would have been more welcome to me than the whole Polish army, with the whole Kingdom of Poland thrown in, to which, as a native of the province of Posen, I naturally had a strong instinctive dislike. The Polish army could at best only provide a few divisions, which were not to be weighed in the scale against the relief which we should experience by the disappearance of Russia from the ranks of our enemies. It was a very simple calculation, on which I need not waste words here. The difficulty was that, here as elsewhere, wishes and hopes did not bring peace and that the Government and the diplomats did not seem to get further than wishes and hopes. Doubtless they felt that there was no real ground for these hopes, or they would not in August have produced their Polish programme, which was aimed directly against Russia. They did not get beyond reflections on peace, such as might be indulged in at any time. There was never even a reasonable possibility of getting into touch with Stürmer, nor the remotest suggestion of any move on his part. No one really believed in the possibility of concluding peace with Russia. The military situation in September and October did not favour it, even although the Entente must have perceived by October that their great autumn campaign of 1916 would not succeed. On the 21st October the Chancellor stated that there was then no prospect of a separate peace with Russia, which was far too dependent on England.

In laying for G.H.Q. the foundations for the further prosecution of the war, and to strengthen our forces, I had a wide field of work to cultivate. I could, of course, not do all the ploughing and sowing with my own hand. Where I found intelligent co-operation and the same serious view of the situation as I held myself, I sowed good seed. But often it was poor, and the field gave no yield. Weeds, too, grew up and choked what had hitherto been a good crop.

END OF VOLUME I

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